rnia
l

THE LIBRARY
OF
THE UNIVERSITY
OF CALIFORNIA
LOS ANGELES

IN MEMORY OF

MRS. VIRGINIA B. SPORER

Frederic Remington, del.

THE TWO OPPONENTS CAME NEARER

From "The Iliad of Sandy Bar"

NOVELS AND STORIES
OF
BRET HARTE

MRS. SKAGGS'S HUSBANDS, AND
OTHER SKETCHES
THE STORY OF A MINE

THE JEFFERSON PRESS
BOSTON NEW YORK

COPYRIGHT, 1872, BY JAMES R. OSGOOD & CO.
COPYRIGHT, 1877 AND 1900, BY BRET HARTE
COPYRIGHT, 1905, BY HOUGHTON, MIFFLIN & CO.

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

MRS. SKAGGS'S HUSBANDS AND OTHER SKETCHES

2039868

CONTENTS.

	Page
Mrs. Skaggs's Husbands	3
How Santa Claus came to Simpson's Bar	55
The Princess Bob and her Friends	80
The Iliad of Sandy Bar	102
Mr. Thompson's Prodigal	121
The Romance of Madroño Hollow	134
The Poet of Sierra Flat	153
The Christmas Gift that came to Rupert	171
URBAN SKETCHES.	
A Venerable Impostor	185
From a Balcony	191
Melons	199
Surprising Adventures of Master Charles Summerton	210
Sidewalkings	216
A Boy's Dog	224
Charitable Reminiscences	230
"Seeing the Steamer off"	238
Neighborhoods I have moved from	245

My Suburban Residence 259
On a Vulgar Little Boy 267
Waiting for the Ship 271

LEGENDS AND TALES.

The Legend of Monte del Diablo . . 277
The Adventure of Padre Vicentio . . . 299
The Legend of Devil's Point . . . 310
The Devil and the Broker 322
The Ogress of Silver Land . . . 328
The Ruins of San Francisco 337
A Night at Wingdam 342

MRS. SKAGGS'S HUSBANDS.

PART I. — WEST.

THE sun was rising in the foot-hills. But for an hour the black mass of Sierra eastward of Angel's had been outlined with fire, and the conventional morning had come two hours before with the down coach from Placerville. The dry, cold, dewless California night still lingered in the long cañons and folded skirts of Table Mountain. Even on the mountain road the air was still sharp, and that urgent necessity for something to keep out the chill, which sent the barkeeper sleepily among his bottles and wineglasses at the station, obtained all along the road.

Perhaps it might be said that the first stir of life was in the bar-rooms. A few birds twittered in the sycamores at the roadside, but long before that glasses had clicked and bottles gurgled in the saloon of the Mansion House. This was still lit by a dissipated-looking hanging-lamp, which was evidently the worse for having been up all night, and bore a singular resemblance to a faded reveller of Angel's, who even then sputtered and flickered in *his* socket in an arm-chair below it, — a resem-

blance so plain that when the first level sunbeam pierced the window-pane, the barkeeper, moved by a sentiment of consistency and compassion, put them both out together.

Then the sun came up haughtily. When it had passed the eastern ridge it began, after its habit, to lord it over Angel's, sending the thermometer up twenty degrees in as many minutes, driving the mules to the sparse shade of corrals and fences, making the red dust incandescent, and renewing its old imperious aggression on the spiked bosses of the convex shield of pines that defended Table Mountain. Thither by nine o'clock all coolness had retreated, and the "outsides" of the up stage plunged their hot faces in its aromatic shadows as in water.

It was the custom of the driver of the Wingdam coach to whip up his horses and enter Angel's at that remarkable pace which the woodcuts in the hotel bar-room represented to credulous humanity as the usual rate of speed of that conveyance. At such times the habitual expression of disdainful reticence and lazy official severity which he wore on the box became intensified as the loungers gathered about the vehicle, and only the boldest ventured to address him. It was the Hon. Judge Beeswinger, Member of Assembly, who to-day presumed, perhaps rashly, on the strength of his official position.

"Any political news from below, Bill?" he asked, as the latter slowly descended from his lofty perch, without, however, any perceptible coming down of mien or manner.

"Not much," said Bill, with deliberate gravity. "The President o' the United States hez n't bin hisself sens you refoosed that seat in the Cabinet. The ginral feelin' in perlitical circles is one o' regret."

Irony, even of this outrageous quality, was too common in Angel's to excite either a smile or a frown. Bill slowly entered the bar-room during a dry, dead silence, in which only a faint spirit of emulation survived.

"Ye did n't bring up that agint o' Rothschild's this trip?" asked the barkeeper, slowly, by way of vague contribution to the prevailing tone of conversation.

"No," responded Bill, with thoughtful exactitude. "He said he could n't look inter that claim o' Johnson's without first consultin' the Bank o' England."

The Mr. Johnson here alluded to being present as the faded reveller the barkeeper had lately put out, and as the alleged claim notoriously possessed no attractions whatever to capitalists, expectation naturally looked to him for some response to this evident challenge. He did so by simply stating that he would "take sugar" in his, and by walking un-

steadily toward the bar, as if accepting a festive invitation. To the credit of Bill be it recorded that he did not attempt to correct the mistake, but gravely touched glasses with him, and after saying "Here 's another nail in your coffin," — a cheerful sentiment, to which "And the hair all off your head," was playfully added by the others, — he threw off his liquor with a single dexterous movement of head and elbow, and stood refreshed.

"Hello, old major!" said Bill, suddenly setting down his glass. "Are *you* there?"

It was a boy, who, becoming bashfully conscious that this epithet was addressed to him, retreated sideways to the doorway, where he stood beating his hat against the door-post with an assumption of indifference that his downcast but mirthful dark eyes and reddening cheek scarcely bore out. Perhaps it was owing to his size, perhaps it was to a certain cherubic outline of face and figure, perhaps to a peculiar trustfulness of expression, that he did not look half his age, which was really fourteen.

Everybody in Angel's knew the boy. Either under the venerable title bestowed by Bill, or as "Tom Islington," after his adopted father, his was a familiar presence in the settlement, and the theme of much local criticism and comment. His waywardness, indolence, and unaccountable amiability — a quality at once suspicious and gratui-

tous in a pioneer community like Angel's — had often been the subject of fierce discussion. A large and reputable majority believed him destined for the gallows; a minority not quite so reputable enjoyed his presence without troubling themselves much about his future; to one or two the evil predictions of the majority possessed neither novelty nor terror.

"Anything for me, Bill?" asked the boy, half mechanically, with the air of repeating some jocular formulary perfectly understood by Bill.

"Anythin' for you!" echoed Bill, with an overacted severity equally well understood by Tommy, — "anythin' for you? No! And it 's my opinion there won't be anythin' for you ez long ez you hang around bar-rooms and spend your valooable time with loafers and bummers. Git!"

The reproof was accompanied by a suitable exaggeration of gesture (Bill had seized a decanter), before which the boy retreated still good-humoredly. Bill followed him to the door. "Dern my skin, if he hez n't gone off with that bummer Johnson," he added, as he looked down the road.

"What 's he expectin', Bill?" asked the barkeeper.

"A letter from his aunt. Reckon he 'll hev to take it out in expectin'. Likely they 're glad to get shut o' him."

"He 's leadin' a shiftless, idle life here," interposed the Member of Assembly.

"Well," said Bill, who never allowed any one but himself to abuse his *protégé*, "seein' he ain't expectin' no offis from the hands of an enlightened constitooency, it *is* raythor a shiftless life." After delivering this Parthian arrow with a gratuitous twanging of the bow to indicate its offensive personality, Bill winked at the barkeeper, slowly resumed a pair of immense, bulgy buckskin gloves, which gave his fingers the appearance of being painfully sore and bandaged, strode to the door without looking at anybody, called out, "All aboard," with a perfunctory air of supreme indifference whether the invitation was heeded, remounted his box, and drove stolidly away.

Perhaps it was well that he did so, for the conversation at once assumed a disrespectful attitude toward Tom and his relatives. It was more than intimated that Tom's alleged aunt was none other than Tom's real mother, while it was also asserted that Tom's alleged uncle did not himself participate in this intimate relationship to the boy to an extent which the fastidious taste of Angel's deemed moral and necessary. Popular opinion also believed that Islington, the adopted father, who received a certain stipend ostensibly for the boy's support, retained it as a reward for his reticence regarding these facts. "He ain't ruinin' hisself by wastin' it on Tom," said the barkeeper, who

possibly possessed positive knowledge of much of Islington's disbursements. But at this point exhausted nature languished among some of the debaters, and he turned from the frivolity of conversation to his severer professional duties.

It was also well that Bill's momentary attitude of didactic propriety was not further excited by the subsequent conduct of his *protégé*. For by this time Tom, half supporting the unstable Johnson, who developed a tendency to occasionally dash across the glaring road, but checked himself midway each time, reached the corral which adjoined the Mansion House. At its farther extremity was a pump and horse-trough. Here, without a word being spoken, but evidently in obedience to some habitual custom, Tom led his companion. With the boy's assistance, Johnson removed his coat and neckcloth, turned back the collar of his shirt, and gravely placed his head beneath the pump-spout. With equal gravity and deliberation, Tom took his place at the handle. For a few moments only the splashing of water and regular strokes of the pump broke the solemnly ludicrous silence. Then there was a pause in which Johnson put his hands to his dripping head, felt of it critically as if it belonged to somebody else, and raised his eyes to his companion. "That ought to fetch *it*," said Tom, in answer to the look. "Ef it don't," replied Johnson, doggedly, with an air of relieving himself of

all further responsibility in the matter, "it 's got to, thet 's all!"

If "it" referred to some change in the physiognomy of Johnson, "it" had probably been "fetched" by the process just indicated. The head that went under the pump was large, and clothed with bushy, uncertain-colored hair; the face was flushed, puffy, and expressionless, the eyes injected and full. The head that came out from under the pump was of smaller size and different shape, the hair straight, dark, and sleek, the face pale and hollow-cheeked, the eyes bright and restless. In the haggard, nervous ascetic that rose from the horse-trough there was very little trace of the Bacchus that had bowed there a moment before. Familiar as Tom must have been with the spectacle, he could not help looking inquiringly at the trough, as if expecting to see some traces of the previous Johnson in its shallow depths.

A narrow strip of willow, alder, and buckeye — a mere dusty, ravelled fringe of the green mantle that swept the high shoulders of Table Mountain — lapped the edge of the corral. The silent pair were quick to avail themselves of even its scant shelter from the overpowering sun. They had not proceeded far, before Johnson, who was walking quite rapidly in advance, suddenly brought himself up, and turned to his companion with an interrogative "Eh?"

"I did n't speak," said Tommy, quietly.

"Who said you spoke?" said Johnson, with a quick look of cunning. "In course you did n't speak, and I did n't speak, neither. Nobody spoke. Wot makes you think you spoke?" he continued, peering curiously into Tommy's eyes.

The smile which habitually shone there quickly vanished as the boy stepped quietly to his companion's side, and took his arm without a word.

"In course you did n't speak, Tommy," said Johnson, deprecatingly. "You ain't a boy to go for to play an ole soaker like me. That 's wot I like you for. Thet 's wot I seed in you from the first. I sez, 'Thet 'ere boy ain't goin' to play you, Johnson! You can go your whole pile on him, when you can't trust even a bar-keep.' Thet 's wot I said. Eh?"

This time Tommy prudently took no notice of the interrogation, and Johnson went on: "Ef I was to ask you another question, you would n't go to play me neither, — would you, Tommy?"

"No," said the boy.

"Ef I was to ask you," continued Johnson, without heeding the reply, but with a growing anxiety of eye and a nervous twitching of his lips, — "ef I was to ask you, fur instance, ef that was a jackass rabbit thet jest passed, — eh? — you 'd say it was or was not, ez the case may be. You would n't play the ole man on thet?"

"No," said Tommy, quietly, "it *was* a jackass rabbit."

"Ef I was to ask you," continued Johnson, "ef it wore, say, fur instance, a green hat with yaller ribbons, you would n't play me, and say it did, onless," — he added, with intensified cunning, — "onless it *did?*"

"No," said Tommy, "of course I would n't; but then, you see, *it did.*"

"It did?"

"It did!" repeated Tommy, stoutly; "a green hat with yellow ribbons — and — and — a red rosette."

"I did n't get to see the ros-ette," said Johnson, with slow and conscientious deliberation, yet with an evident sense of relief; "but that ain't sayin' it warn't there, you know. Eh?"

Tommy glanced quietly at his companion. There were great beads of perspiration on his ashen-gray forehead and on the ends of his lank hair; the hand which twitched spasmodically in his was cold and clammy, the other, which was free, had a vague, purposeless, jerky activity, as if attached to some deranged mechanism. Without any apparent concern in these phenomena, Tommy halted, and, seating himself on a log, motioned his companion to a place beside him. Johnson obeyed without a word. Slight as was the act, perhaps no other incident of their singular companionship

indicated as completely the dominance of this careless, half-effeminate, but self-possessed boy over this doggedly self-willed, abnormally excited man.

"It ain't the square thing," said Johnson, after a pause, with a laugh that was neither mirthful nor musical, and frightened away a lizard that had been regarding the pair with breathless suspense, — "it ain't the square thing for jackass rabbits to wear hats, Tommy, — is it, eh?"

"Well," said Tommy, with unmoved composure, "sometimes they do and sometimes they don't. Animals are mighty queer." And here Tommy went off in an animated, but, I regret to say, utterly untruthful and untrustworthy account of the habits of California fauna, until he was interrupted by Johnson.

"And snakes, eh, Tommy?" said the man, with an abstracted air, gazing intently on the ground before him.

"And snakes," said Tommy; "but they don't bite, — at least not that kind you see. There! — don't move, Uncle Ben, don't move; they 're gone now. And it 's about time you took your dose."

Johnson had hurriedly risen as if to leap upon the log, but Tommy had as quickly caught his arm with one hand while he drew a bottle from his pocket with the other. Johnson paused, and eyed the bottle. "Ef you say so, my boy," he

faltered, as his fingers closed nervously around it; "say 'when,' then." He raised the bottle to his lips and took a long draught, the boy regarding him critically. "When," said Tommy, suddenly. Johnson started, flushed, and returned the bottle quickly. But the color that had risen to his cheek stayed there, his eye grew less restless, and as they moved away again, the hand that rested on Tommy's shoulder was steadier.

Their way lay along the flank of Table Mountain, — a wandering trail through a tangled solitude that might have seemed virgin and unbroken but for a few oyster-cans, yeast-powder tins, and empty bottles that had been apparently stranded by the "first low wash" of pioneer waves. On the ragged trunk of an enormous pine hung a few tufts of gray hair caught from a passing grizzly, but in strange juxtaposition at its foot lay an empty bottle of incomparable bitters, — the *chef-d'œuvre* of a hygienic civilization, and blazoned with the arms of an all-healing republic. The head of a rattlesnake peered from a case that had contained tobacco, which was still brightly placarded with the high-colored effigy of a popular *danseuse*. And a little beyond this the soil was broken and fissured, there was a confused mass of roughly hewn timber, a straggling line of sluicing, a heap of gravel and dirt, a rude cabin, and the claim of Johnson.

Except for the rudest purposes of shelter from rain and cold, the cabin possessed but little advantage over the simple savagery of surrounding nature. It had all the practical directness of the habitation of some animal, without its comfort or picturesque quality; the very birds that haunted it for food must have felt their own superiority as architects. It was inconceivably dirty, even with its scant capacity for accretion; it was singularly stale, even in its newness and freshness of material. Unspeakably dreary as it was in shadow, the sunlight visited it in a blind, aching, purposeless way, as if despairing of mellowing its outlines or of even tanning it into color.

The claim worked by Johnson in his intervals of sobriety was represented by half a dozen rude openings in the mountain-side, with the heaped-up *débris* of rock and gravel before the mouth of each. They gave very little evidence of engineering skill or constructive purpose, or indeed showed anything but the vague, successively abandoned essays of their projector. To-day they served another purpose, for as the sun had heated the little cabin almost to the point of combustion, curling up the long dry shingles, and starting aromatic tears from the green pine beams, Tommy led Johnson into one of the larger openings, and with a sense of satisfaction threw himself panting upon its rocky floor. Here and there the grateful damp-

ness was condensed in quiet pools of water, or in a monotonous and soothing drip from the rocks above. Without lay the staring sunlight, — colorless, clarified, intense.

For a few moments they lay resting on their elbows in blissful contemplation of the heat they had escaped. "Wot do you say," said Johnson, slowly, without looking at his companion, but abstractly addressing himself to the landscape beyond, — "wot do you say to two straight games fur one thousand dollars?"

"Make it five thousand," replied Tommy, reflectively, also to the landscape, "and I 'm in."

"Wot do I owe you now?" said Johnson, after a lengthened silence.

"One hundred and seventy-five thousand two hundred and fifty dollars," replied Tommy, with business-like gravity.

"Well," said Johnson, after a deliberation commensurate with the magnitude of the transaction, "ef you win, call it a hundred and eighty thousand, round. War 's the keerds?"

They were in an old tin box in a crevice of a rock above his head. They were greasy and worn with service. Johnson dealt, albeit his right hand was still uncertain, — hovering, after dropping the cards, aimlessly about Tommy, and being only recalled by a strong nervous effort. Yet, notwithstanding this incapacity for even honest manipu-

lation, Mr. Johnson covertly turned a knave from the bottom of the pack with such shameless inefficiency and gratuitous unskilfulness, that even Tommy was obliged to cough and look elsewhere to hide his embarrassment. Possibly for this reason the young gentleman was himself constrained, by way of correction, to add a valuable card to his own hand, over and above the number he legitimately held.

Nevertheless, the game was unexciting, and dragged listlessly. Johnson won. He recorded the fact and the amount with a stub of pencil and shaking fingers in wandering hieroglyphics all over a pocket diary. Then there was a long pause, when Johnson slowly drew something from his pocket, and held it up before his companion. It was apparently a dull red stone.

"Ef," said Johnson, slowly, with his old look of simple cunning, — "ef you happened to pick up sich a rock ez that, Tommy, what might you say it was?"

"Don't know," said Tommy.

"Might n't you say," continued Johnson, cautiously, "that it was gold, or silver?"

"Neither," said Tommy, promptly.

"Might n't you say it was quicksilver? Might n't you say that ef thar was a friend o' yourn ez knew war to go and turn out ten ton of it a day, and every ton worth two thousand dollars, that he

had a soft thing, a very soft thing, — allowin', Tommy, that you used sich language, which you don't?"

"But," said the boy, coming to the point with great directness, "*do* you know where to get it? have you struck it, Uncle Ben?"

Johnson looked carefully around. "I hev, Tommy. Listen. I know whar thar 's cartloads of it. But thar 's only one other specimen — the mate to this yer — thet 's above ground, and thet 's in 'Frisco. Thar 's an agint comin' up in a day or two to look into it. I sent for him. Eh?"

His bright, restless eyes were concentrated on Tommy's face now, but the boy showed neither surprise nor interest. Least of all did he betray any recollection of Bill's ironical and gratuitous corroboration of this part of the story.

"Nobody knows it," continued Johnson, in a nervous whisper, — "nobody knows it but you and the agint in 'Frisco. The boys workin' round yar passes by and sees the old man grubbin' away, and no signs o' color, not even rotten quartz; the boys loafin' round the Mansion House sees the old man lyin' round free in bar-rooms, and they laughs and sez, 'Played out,' and spects nothin'. Maybe ye think they spects suthin now, eh?" queried Johnson, suddenly, with a sharp look of suspicion.

Tommy looked up, shook his head, threw a stone at a passing rabbit, but did not reply.

"When I fust set eyes on you, Tommy," contin-

ued Johnson, apparently reassured, "the fust day you kem and pumped for me, an entire stranger, and hevin no call to do it, I sez, 'Johnson, Johnson,' sez I, 'yer 's a boy you kin trust. Yer 's a boy that won't play you; yer 's a chap that 's white and square,' — white and square, Tommy: them 's the very words I used."

He paused for a moment, and then went on in a confidential whisper, "'You want capital, Johnson,' sez I, 'to develop your resources, and you want a pardner. Capital you can send for, but your pardner, Johnson, — your pardner is right yer. And his name, it is Tommy Islington.' Them 's the very words I used."

He stopped and chafed his clammy hands upon his knees. "It 's six months ago sens I made you my pardner. Thar ain't a lick I 've struck sens then, Tommy, thar ain't a han'ful o' yearth I 've washed, thar ain't a shovelful o' rock I 've turned over, but I tho't o' you. 'Share, and share alike,' sez I. When I wrote to my agint, I wrote ekal for my pardner, Tommy Islington, he hevin no call to know ef the same was man or boy."

He had moved nearer the boy, and would perhaps have laid his hand caressingly upon him, but even in his manifest affection there was a singular element of awed restraint and even fear, — a suggestion of something withheld even his fullest confidences, a hopeless perception of some vague bar-

rier that never could be surmounted. He may have been at times dimly conscious that, in the eyes which Tommy raised to his, there was thorough intellectual appreciation, critical good-humor, even feminine softness, but nothing more. His nervousness somewhat heightened by his embarrassment, he went on with an attempt at calmness which his twitching white lips and unsteady fingers made pathetically grotesque. "Thar 's a bill o' sale in my bunk, made out accordin' to law, of an ekal ondivided half of the claim, and the consideration is two hundred and fifty thousand dollars, — gambling debts, — gambling debts from me to you, Tommy, — you understand ? " — nothing could exceed the intense cunning of his eye at this moment, — "and then thar 's a will."

"A will ? " said Tommy, in amused surprise.

Johnson looked frightened.

"Eh ? " he said, hurriedly, "wot will ? Who said anythin' 'bout a will, Tommy ? "

"Nobody," replied Tommy, with unblushing calm.

Johnson passed his hand over his cold forehead, wrung the damp ends of his hair with his fingers, and went on: "Times when I 'm took bad ez I was to-day, the boys about yer sez — you sez, maybe, Tommy — it 's whiskey. It ain't, Tommy. It 's pizen, — quicksilver pizen. That 's what 's the matter with me. I 'm salviated ! Salviated with merkery.

"I 've heerd o' it before," continued Johnson, appealing to the boy, "and ez a boy o' permiskus reading, I reckon you hev too. Them men as works in cinnabar sooner or later gets salviated. It 's bound to fetch 'em some time. Salviated by merkery."

"What are you goin' to do for it?" asked Tommy.

"When the agint comes up, and I begins to realize on this yer mine," said Johnson, contemplatively, "I goes to New York. I sez to the barkeep' o' the hotel, 'Show me the biggest doctor here.' He shows me. I sez to him, 'Salviated by merkery, — a year's standin', — how much?' He sez, 'Five thousand dollars, and take two o' these pills at bedtime, and an ekil number o' powders at meals, and come back in a week.' And I goes back in a week, cured, and signs a certifikit to that effect."

Encouraged by a look of interest in Tommy's eye, he went on.

"So I gets cured. I goes to the barkeep', and I sez, 'Show me the biggest, fashionblest house thet 's for sale yer.' And he sez, 'The biggest, nat'rally b'longs to John Jacob Astor.' And I sez, 'Show him,' and he shows him. And I sez, 'Wot might you ask for this yer house?' And he looks at me scornful, and sez, 'Go 'way, old man; you must be sick.' And I fetches him one over

the left eye, and he apologizes, and I gives him his own price for the house. I stocks that house with mohogany furniture and pervisions, and thar we lives, — you and me, Tommy, you and me!"

The sun no longer shone upon the hillside. The shadows of the pines were beginning to creep over Johnson's claim, and the air within the cavern was growing chill. In the gathering darkness his eyes shone brightly as he went on: "Then thar comes a day when we gives a big spread. We invites govners, members o' Congress, gentlemen o' fashion, and the like. And among 'em I invites a Man as holds his head very high, a Man I once knew; but he does n't know I knows him, and he does n't remember me. And he comes and he sits opposite me, and I watches him. And he 's very airy, this Man, and very chipper, and he wipes his mouth with a white hankercher, and he smiles, and he ketches my eye. And he sez, 'A glass o' wine with you, Mr. Johnson'; and he fills his glass and I fills mine, and we rises. And I heaves that wine, glass and all, right into his damned grinnin' face. And he jumps for me, — for he is very game, this Man, very game, — but some on 'em grabs him, and he sez, 'Who be you?' And I sez, 'Skaggs! damn you, Skaggs! Look at me! Gimme back my wife and child, gimme back the money you stole, gimme back the good name you took away, gimme

back the health you ruined, gimme back the last twelve years! Give 'em to me, damn you, quick, before I cuts your heart out!' And naterally, Tommy, he can't do it. And so I cuts his heart out, my boy; I cuts his heart out."

The purely animal fury of his eye suddenly changed again to cunning. "You think they hangs me for it, Tommy, but they don't. Not much, Tommy. I goes to the biggest lawyer there, and I says to him, 'Salviated by merkery, — you hear me, — salviated by merkery.' And he winks at me, and he goes to the judge, and he sez, 'This yer unfortnet man is n't responsible, — he 's been salviated by merkery.' And he brings witnesses; you comes, Tommy, and you sez ez how you 've seen me took bad afore; and the doctor, he comes, and he sez as how he 's seen me frightful; and the jury, without leavin' their seats, brings in a verdict o' justifiable insanity, — salviated by merkery."

In the excitement of his climax he had risen to his feet, but would have fallen had not Tommy caught him and led him into the open air. In this sharper light there was an odd change visible in his yellow-white face, — a change which caused Tommy to hurriedly support him, half leading, half dragging him toward the little cabin. When they had reached it, Tommy placed him on a rude "bunk," or shelf, and stood for a moment in anx-

ious contemplation of the tremor-stricken man before him. Then he said rapidly: "Listen, Uncle Ben. I 'm goin' to town — to town, you understand — for the doctor. You 're not to get up or move on any account until I return. Do you hear?" Johnson nodded violently. "I 'll be back in two hours." In another moment he was gone.

For an hour Johnson kept his word. Then he suddenly sat up, and began to gaze fixedly at a corner of the cabin. From gazing at it he began to smile, from smiling at it he began to talk, from talking at it he began to scream, from screaming he passed to cursing and sobbing wildly. Then he lay quiet again.

He was so still that to merely human eyes he might have seemed asleep or dead. But a squirrel, that, emboldened by the stillness, had entered from the roof, stopped short upon a beam above the bunk, for he saw that the man's foot was slowly and cautiously moving toward the floor, and that the man's eyes were as intent and watchful as his own. Presently, still without a sound, both feet were upon the floor. And then the bunk creaked, and the squirrel whisked into the eaves of the roof. When he peered forth again, everything was quiet, and the man was gone.

An hour later two muleteers on the Placerville Road passed a man with dishevelled hair, glaring, bloodshot eyes, and clothes torn with bramble and

stained with the red dust of the mountain. They pursued him, when he turned fiercely on the foremost, wrested a pistol from his grasp, and broke away. Later still, when the sun had dropped behind Payne's Ridge, the underbrush on Deadwood Slope crackled with a stealthy but continuous tread. It must have been an animal whose dimly outlined bulk, in the gathering darkness, showed here and there in vague but incessant motion; it could be nothing but an animal whose utterance was at once so incoherent, monotonous, and unremitting. Yet, when the sound came nearer, and the chaparral was parted, it seemed to be a man, and that man Johnson.

Above the baying of phantasmal hounds that pressed him hard and drove him on, with never rest or mercy; above the lashing of a spectral whip that curled about his limbs, sang in his ears, and continually stung him forward; above the outcries of the unclean shapes that thronged about him, — he could still distinguish one real sound, — the rush and sweep of hurrying waters. The Stanislaus River! A thousand feet below him drove its yellowing current. Through all the vacillations of his unseated mind he had clung to one idea, — to reach the river, to lave in it, to swim it if need be, but to put it forever between him and the harrying shapes, to drown forever in its turbid depths the thronging spectres, to wash away in its yel-

low flood all stains and color of the past. And now he was leaping from boulder to boulder, from blackened stump to stump, from gnarled bush to bush, caught for a moment and withheld by clinging vines, or plunging downward into dusty hollows, until, rolling, dropping, sliding, and stumbling, he reached the river-bank, whereon he fell, rose, staggered forward, and fell again with outstretched arms upon a rock that breasted the swift current. And there he lay as dead.

A few stars came out hesitatingly above Deadwood Slope. A cold wind that had sprung up with the going down of the sun fanned them into momentary brightness, swept the heated flanks of the mountain, and ruffled the river. Where the fallen man lay there was a sharp curve in the stream, so that in the gathering shadows the rushing water seemed to leap out of the darkness and to vanish again. Decayed drift-wood, trunks of trees, fragments of broken sluicing, — the wash and waste of many a mile, — swept into sight a moment, and were gone. All of decay, wreck, and foulness gathered in the long circuit of mining-camp and settlement, all the dregs and refuse of a crude and wanton civilization, reappeared for an instant, and then were hurried away in the darkness and lost. No wonder that as the wind ruffled the yellow waters the waves seemed to lift their unclean hands toward the rock whereon the

fallen man lay, as if eager to snatch him from it, too, and hurry him toward the sea.

It was very still. In the clear air a horn blown a mile away was heard distinctly. The jingling of a spur and a laugh on the highway over Payne's Ridge sounded clearly across the river. The rattling of harness and hoofs foretold for many minutes the approach of the Wingdam coach, that at last, with flashing lights, passed within a few feet of the rock. Then for an hour all again was quiet. Presently the moon, round and full, lifted herself above the serried ridge and looked down upon the river. At first the bared peak of Deadwood Hill gleamed white and skull-like. Then the shadows of Payne's Ridge cast on the slope slowly sank away, leaving the unshapely stumps, the dusty fissures, and clinging outcrop of Deadwood Slope to stand out in black and silver. Still stealing softly downward, the moonlight touched the bank and the rock, and then glittered brightly on the river. The rock was bare and the man was gone, but the river still hurried swiftly to the sea.

"Is there anything for me?" asked Tommy Islington, as, a week after, the stage drew up at the Mansion House, and Bill slowly entered the barroom. Bill did not reply, but, turning to a stranger who had entered with him, indicated with a jerk of his finger the boy. The stranger turned

with an air half of business, half of curiosity, and looked critically at Tommy. "Is there anything for me?" repeated Tommy, a little confused at the silence and scrutiny. Bill walked deliberately to the bar, and, placing his back against it, faced Tommy with a look of demure enjoyment.

"Ef," he remarked slowly, — "ef a hundred thousand dollars down and half a million in perspektive is ennything, Major, THERE IS!"

MRS. SKAGGS'S HUSBANDS.

PART II. — EAST.

IT was characteristic of Angel's that the disappearance of Johnson, and the fact that he had left his entire property to Tommy, thrilled the community but slightly in comparison with the astounding discovery that he had anything to leave. The finding of a cinnabar lode at Angel's absorbed all collateral facts or subsequent details. Prospectors from adjoining camps thronged the settlement; the hillside for a mile on either side of Johnson's claim was staked out and pre-empted; trade received a sudden stimulus; and, in the excited rhetoric of the "Weekly Record," "a new era had broken upon Angel's." "On Thursday last," added that paper, "over five hundred dollars was taken in over the bar of the Mansion House."

Of the fate of Johnson there was little doubt. He had been last seen lying on a boulder on the river-bank by outside passengers of the Wingdam night coach, and when Finn of Robinson's Ferry admitted to have fired three shots from a revolver at a dark object struggling in the water near the ferry, which he "suspicioned" to be a bear, the

question seemed to be settled. Whatever might have been the fallibility of his judgment, of the accuracy of his aim there could be no doubt. The general belief that Johnson, after possessing himself of the muleteer's pistol, could have run amuck, gave a certain retributive justice to this story, which rendered it acceptable to the camp.

It was also characteristic of Angel's that no feeling of envy or opposition to the good fortune of Tommy Islington prevailed there. That he was thoroughly cognizant, from the first, of Johnson's discovery, that his attentions to him were interested, calculating, and speculative was, however, the general belief of the majority, — a belief that, singularly enough, awakened the first feelings of genuine respect for Tommy ever shown by the camp. "He ain't no fool; Yuba Bill seed thet from the first," said the barkeeper. It was Yuba Bill who applied for the guardianship of Tommy after his accession to Johnson's claim, and on whose bonds the richest men of Calaveras were represented. It was Yuba Bill, also, when Tommy was sent East to finish his education, accompanied him to San Francisco, and, before parting with his charge on the steamer's deck, drew him aside, and said, "Ef at enny time you want enny money, Tommy, over and 'bove your 'lowance, you kin write; but ef you 'll take my advice," he added, with a sudden huskiness mitigating the severity of his voice, "you 'll forget every

derned ole spavined, string-halted bummer as you ever met or knew at Angel's, — ev'ry one, Tommy, — ev'ry one! And so — boy — take care of yourself — and — and — God bless ye, and pertikerly d—n me for a first-class A 1 fool." It was Yuba Bill, also, after this speech, glared savagely around, walked down the crowded gang-plank with a rigid and aggressive shoulder, picked a quarrel with his cabman, and, after bundling that functionary into his own vehicle, took the reins himself, and drove furiously to his hotel. "It cost me," said Bill, recounting the occurrence somewhat later at Angel's, — "it cost me a matter o' twenty dollars afore the jedge the next mornin'; but you kin bet high thet I taught them 'Frisco chaps suthin new about drivin'. I did n't make it lively in Montgomery Street for about ten minutes, — O no!"

And so by degrees the two original locaters of the great Cinnabar Lode faded from the memory of Angel's, and Calaveras knew them no more. In five years their very names had been forgotten; in seven the name of the town was changed; in ten the town itself was transported bodily to the hillside, and the chimney of the Union Smelting Works by night flickered like a corpse-light over the site of Johnson's cabin, and by day poisoned the pure spices of the pines. Even the Mansion House was dismantled, and the Wingdam stage

deserted the highway for a shorter cut by Quicksilver City. Only the bared crest of Deadwood Hill, as of old, sharply cut the clear blue sky, and at its base, as of old, the Stanislaus River, unwearied and unresting, babbled, whispered, and hurried away to the sea.

A midsummer's day was breaking lazily on the Atlantic. There was not wind enough to move the vapors in the foggy offing, but where the vague distance heaved against a violet sky there were dull red streaks that, growing brighter, presently painted out the stars. Soon the brown rocks of Greyport appeared faintly suffused, and then the whole ashen line of dead coast was kindled, and the lighthouse beacons went out one by one. And then a hundred sail, before invisible, started out of the vapory horizon, and pressed toward the shore. It was morning, indeed, and some of the best society in Greyport, having been up all night, were thinking it was time to go to bed.

For as the sky flashed brighter it fired the clustering red roofs of a picturesque house by the sands that had all that night, from open lattice and illuminated balcony, given light and music to the shore. It glittered on the broad crystal spaces of a great conservatory that looked upon an exquisite lawn, where all night long the blended odors of sea and shore had swooned under the summer

moon. But it wrought confusion among the colored lamps on the long veranda, and startled a group of ladies and gentlemen who had stepped from the drawing-room window to gaze upon it. It was so searching and sincere in its way, that, as the carriage of the fairest Miss Gillyflower rolled away, that peerless young woman, catching sight of her face in the oval mirror, instantly pulled down the blinds, and, nestling the whitest shoulders in Greyport against the crimson cushions, went to sleep.

"How haggard everybody is! Rose, dear, you look almost intellectual," said Blanche Masterman.

"I hope not," said Rose, simply. "Sunrises are very trying. Look how that pink regularly puts out Mrs. Brown-Robinson, hair and all!"

"The angels," said the Count de Nugat, with a polite gesture toward the sky, "must have find these celestial combinations very bad for the *toilette*."

"They 're safe in white, — except when they sit for their pictures in Venice," said Blanche. "How fresh Mr. Islington looks! It 's really uncomplimentary to us."

"I suppose the sun recognizes in me no rival," said the young man, demurely. "But," he added, "I have lived much in the open air, and require very little sleep."

"How delightful!" said Mrs. Brown-Robinson,

in a low, enthusiastic voice, and a manner that held the glowing sentiment of sixteen and the practical experiences of thirty-two in dangerous combination; — "how perfectly delightful! What sunrises you must have seen, and in such wild, romantic places! How I envy you! My nephew was a classmate of yours, and has often repeated to me those charming stories you tell of your adventures. Won't you tell some now? Do! How you must tire of us and this artificial life here, so frightfully artificial, you know" (in a confidential whisper); "and then to think of the days when you roamed the great West with the Indians, and the bisons, and the grizzly bears! Of course, you have seen grizzly bears and bisons?"

"Of course he has, dear," said Blanche, a little pettishly, throwing a cloak over her shoulders, and seizing her *chaperon* by the arm; "his earliest infancy was soothed by bisons, and he proudly points to the grizzly bear as the playmate of his youth. Come with me, and I'll tell you all about it. How good it is of you," she added, *sotto voce*, to Islington, as he stood by the carriage, — "how perfectly good it is of you to be like those animals you tell us of, and not know your full power. Think, with your experiences and our credulity, what stories you *might* tell! And you are going to walk? Good night, then." A slim, gloved hand was frankly extended from the window, and the next moment the carriage rolled away.

"Is n't Islington throwing away a chance there?" said Captain Merwin, on the veranda.

"Perhaps he could n't stand my lovely aunt's superadded presence. But then, he 's the guest of Blanche's father, and I dare say they see enough of each other as it is."

"But is n't it a rather dangerous situation?"

"For him, perhaps; although he 's awfully old, and very queer. For her, with an experience that takes in all the available men in both hemispheres, ending with Nugat over there, I should say a man more or less would n't affect her much, anyway. Of course," he laughed, "these are the accents of bitterness. But that was last year."

Perhaps Islington did not overhear the speaker; perhaps, if he did, the criticism was not new. He turned carelessly away, and sauntered out on the road to the sea. Thence he strolled along the sands toward the cliffs, where, meeting an impediment in the shape of a garden wall, he leaped it with a certain agile, boyish ease and experience, and struck across an open lawn toward the rocks again. The best society of Greyport were not early risers, and the spectacle of a trespasser in an evening dress excited only the criticism of grooms hanging about the stables, or cleanly housemaids on the broad verandas that in Greyport architecture dutifully gave upon the sea. Only once, as he entered the boundaries of Cliffwood Lodge, the famous seat of

Renwyck Masterman, was he aware of suspicious scrutiny; but a slouching figure that vanished quickly in the lodge offered no opposition to his progress. Avoiding the pathway to the lodge, Islington kept along the rocks until, reaching a little promontory and rustic pavilion, he sat down and gazed upon the sea.

And presently an infinite peace stole upon him. Except where the waves lapped lazily the crags below, the vast expanse beyond seemed unbroken by ripple, heaving only in broad ponderable sheets, and rhythmically, as if still in sleep. The air was filled with a luminous haze that caught and held the direct sunbeams. In the deep calm that lay upon the sea, it seemed to Islington that all the tenderness of culture, magic of wealth, and spell of refinement that for years had wrought upon that favored shore had extended its gracious influence even here. What a pampered and caressed old ocean it was; cajoled, flattered, and *fêted* where it lay! An odd recollection of the turbid Stanislaus hurrying by the ascetic pines, of the grim outlines of Deadwood Hill, swam before his eyes, and made the yellow green of the velvet lawn and graceful foliage seem almost tropical by contrast. And, looking up, a few yards distant he beheld a tall slip of a girl gazing upon the sea, — Blanche Masterman.

She had plucked somewhere a large fan-shaped

leaf, which she held parasol-wise, shading the blond masses of her hair, and hiding her gray eyes. She had changed her festal dress, with its amplitude of flounce and train, for a closely fitting half-antique habit whose scant outlines would have been trying to limbs less shapely, but which prettily accented the graceful curves and sweeping lines of this Greyport goddess. As Islington rose, she came toward him with a frankly outstretched hand and unconstrained manner. Had she observed him first? I don't know.

They sat down together on a rustic seat, Miss Blanche facing the sea, and shading her eyes with the leaf.

"I don't really know how long I have been sitting here," said Islington, "or whether I have not been actually asleep and dreaming. It seemed too lovely a morning to go to bed. But you?"

From behind the leaf, it appeared that Miss Blanche, on retiring, had been pursued by a hideous winged bug which defied the efforts of herself and maid to dislodge. Odin, the Spitz dog, had insisted upon scratching at the door. And it made her eyes red to sleep in the morning. And she had an early call to make. And the sea looked lovely.

"I 'm glad to find you here, whatever be the cause," said Islington, with his old directness. "To-day, as you know, is my last day in Greyport,

and it is much pleasanter to say good by under this blue sky than even beneath your father's wonderful frescos yonder I want to remember you, too, as part of this pleasant prospect which belongs to us all, rather than recall you in anybody's particular setting."

"I know," said Blanche, with equal directness, "that houses are one of the defects of our civilization; but I don't think I ever heard the idea as elegantly expressed before. Where do you go?"

"I don't know yet. I have several plans. I may go to South America and become president of one of the republics, — I am not particular which. I am rich, but in that part of America which lies outside of Greyport it is necessary for every man to have some work. My friends think I should have some great aim in life, with a capital A. But I was born a vagabond, and a vagabond I shall probably die."

"I don't know anybody in South America," said Blanche, languidly. "There were two girls here last season, but they did n't wear stays in the house, and their white frocks never were properly done up. If you go to South America, you must write to me."

"I will. Can you tell me the name of this flower which I found in your greenhouse. It looks much like a California blossom."

"Perhaps it is. Father bought it of a half-crazy

old man who came here one day. Do you know him?"

Islington laughed. "I am afraid not. But let me present this in a less business-like fashion."

"Thank you. Remind me to give you one in return before you go, — or will you choose yourself?"

They had both risen as by a common instinct.

"Good by."

The cool flower-like hand lay in his for an instant.

"Will you oblige me by putting aside that leaf a moment before I go?"

"But my eyes are red, and I look like a perfect fright."

Yet, after a long pause, the leaf fluttered down, and a pair of very beautiful but withal very clear and critical eyes met his. Islington was constrained to look away. When he turned again, she was gone.

"Mister Hislington, — sir!"

It was Chalker, the English groom, out of breath with running.

"Seein' you alone, sir, — beg your pardon, sir, — but there 's a person — "

"A person! what the devil do you mean? Speak English — no, damn it, I mean don't," said Islington, snappishly.

"I sed a person, sir. Beg pardon — no offence — but not a gent, sir. In the lib'ry."

A little amused even through the utter dissat-

isfaction with himself and vague loneliness that had suddenly come upon him, Islington, as he walked toward the lodge, asked, "Why is n't he a gent?

"No gent — beggin' your pardin, sir — 'ud guy a man in sarvis, sir. Takes me 'ands so, sir, as I sits in the rumble at the gate, and puts 'em downd so, sir, and sez, 'Put 'em in your pocket, young man, — or is it a road agint you expects to see, that you 'olds hup your 'ands, hand crosses 'em like to that,' sez he. ''Old 'ard,' sez he, 'on the short curves, or you 'll bust your precious crust,' sez he. And hasks for you, sir. This way, sir."

They entered the lodge. Islington hurried down the long Gothic hall, and opened the library door.

In an arm-chair, in the centre of the room, a man sat apparently contemplating a large, stiff, yellow hat with an enormous brim, that was placed on the floor before him. His hands rested lightly between his knees, but one foot was drawn up at the side of his chair in a peculiar manner. In the first glance that Islington gave, the attitude in some odd, irreconcilable way suggested a brake. In another moment he dashed across the room, and, holding out both hands, cried, "Yuba Bill!"

The man rose, caught Islington by the shoulders, wheeled him round, hugged him, felt of his ribs like a good-natured ogre, shook his hands violently, laughed, and then said, somewhat ruefully, "And how ever did you know me?"

Seeing that Yuba Bill evidently regarded himself as in some elaborate disguise, Islington laughed, and suggested that it must have been instinct.

"And you?" said Bill, holding him at arm's length, and surveying him critically, — "you! — toe think — toe think — a little cuss no higher nor a trace, a boy as I 've flicked outer the road with a whip time in agin, a boy ez never hed much clothes to speak of, turned into a sport!"

Islington remembered, with a thrill of ludicrous terror, that he still wore his evening dress.

"Turned," continued Yuba Bill, severely, — "turned into a restyourant waiter, — a garsong! Eh, Alfonse, bring me a patty de foy grass and an omelette, demme!"

"Dear old chap!" said Islington, laughing, and trying to put his hand over Bill's bearded mouth, "but you — *you* don't look exactly like yourself! You 're not well, Bill." And indeed, as he turned toward the light, Bill's eyes appeared cavernous, and his hair and beard thickly streaked with gray.

"Maybe it 's this yer harness," said Bill, a little anxiously. "When I hitches on this yer curb" (he indicated a massive gold watch-chain with enormous links), "and mounts this 'morning star,'" (he pointed to a very large solitaire pin which had the appearance of blistering his whole shirt-front), "it kinder weighs heavy on me, Tommy. Other-

wise I 'm all right, my boy, — all right." But he evaded Islington's keen eye, and turned from the light.

"You have something to tell me, Bill," said Islington, suddenly, and with almost brusque directness; "out with it."

Bill did not speak, but moved uneasily toward his hat.

"You did n't come three thousand miles, without a word of warning, to talk to me of old times," said Islington, more kindly, "glad as I would have been to see you. It is n't your way, Bill, and you know it. We shall not be disturbed here," he added, in reply to an inquiring glance that Bill directed to the door, "and I am ready to hear you."

"Firstly, then," said Bill, drawing his chair nearer Islington, "answer me one question, Tommy, fair and square, and up and down."

"Go on," said Islington, with a slight smile.

"Ef I should say to you, Tommy, — say to you to-day, right here, you must come with me, — you must leave this place for a month, a year, two years maybe, perhaps forever, — is there anything that 'ud keep you, — anything, my boy, ez you could n't leave?"

"No," said Tommy, quietly; "I am only visiting here. I thought of leaving Greyport to-day."

"But if I should say to you, Tommy, come with me on a *pasear* to Chiny, to Japan, to South Ameriky, p'r'aps, could you go?"

"Yes," said Islington, after a slight pause.

"Thar is n't ennything," said Bill, drawing a little closer, and lowering his voice confidentially, — "ennything in the way of a young woman — you understand, Tommy — ez would keep you? They 're mighty sweet about here; and whether a man is young or old, Tommy, there 's always some woman as is brake or whip to him!"

In a certain excited bitterness that characterized the delivery of this abstract truth, Bill did not see that the young man's face flushed slightly as he answered "No."

"Then listen. It 's seven years ago, Tommy, thet I was working one o' the Pioneer coaches over from Gold Hill. Ez I stood in front o' the stage-office, the sheriff o' the county comes to me, and he sez, 'Bill,' sez he, 'I 've got a looney chap, as I 'm in charge of, taking 'im down to the 'sylum in Stockton. He 'z quiet and peaceable, but the insides don't like to ride with him. Hev you enny objection to give him a lift on the box beside you?' I sez, 'No; put him up.' When I came to go and get up on that box beside him, that man, Tommy, — that man sittin' there, quiet and peaceable, was — Johnson!

"He did n't know me, my boy," Yuba Bill continued, rising and putting his hands on Tommy's shoulders, — "he did n't know me. He did n't know nothing about you, nor Angel's, nor the quicksilver

lode, nor even his own name. He said his name was Skaggs, but I knowd it was Johnson. Thar was times, Tommy, you might have knocked me off that box with a feather; thar was times when if the twenty-seven passengers o' that stage hed found theirselves swimming in the American River five hundred feet below the road, I never could have explained it satisfactorily to the company, — never.

"The sheriff said," Bill continued hastily, as if to preclude any interruption from the young man, — "the sheriff said he had been brought into Murphy's Camp three years before, dripping with water, and sufferin' from perkussion of the brain, and had been cared for generally by the boys 'round. When I told the sheriff I knowed 'im, I got him to leave him in my care; and I took him to 'Frisco, Tommy, to 'Frisco, and I put him in charge o' the best doctors there, and paid his board myself. There was nothin' he didn't have ez he wanted. Don't look that way, my dear boy, for God's sake, don't!"

"O Bill," said Islington, rising and staggering to the window, "why did you keep this from me?"

"Why?" said Bill, turning on him savagely, — "why? because I warn't a fool. Thar was you, winnin' your way in college; thar was *you*, risin' in the world, and of some account to it; Yer was an old bummer, ez good ez dead to it, — a man ez

oughter been dead afore! a man ez never denied it! But you allus liked him better nor me," said Bill, bitterly.

"Forgive me, Bill," said the young man, seizing both his hands. "I know you did it for the best; but go on."

"Thar ain't much more to tell, nor much use to tell it, as I can see," said Bill, moodily. "He never could be cured, the doctors said, for he had what they called monomania, — was always talking about his wife and darter that somebody had stole away years ago, and plannin' revenge on that somebody. And six months ago he was missed. I tracked him to Carson, to Salt Lake City, to Omaha, to Chicago, to New York, — and here!"

"Here!" echoed Islington.

"Here! And that's what brings me here to-day. Whethers he's crazy or well, whethers he's huntin' you or lookin' up that other man, you must get away from here. You must n't see him. You and me, Tommy, will go away on a cruise. In three or four years he'll be dead or missing, and then we'll come back. Come." And he rose to his feet.

"Bill," said Islington, rising also, and taking the hand of his friend, with the same quiet obstinacy that in the old days had endeared him to Bill, "wherever he is, here or elsewhere, sane or crazy, I shall seek and find him. Every dollar that I have shall be his, every dollar that I have

spent shall be returned to him. I am young yet, thank God, and can work; and if there is a way out of this miserable business, I shall find it."

"I knew," said Bill, with a surliness that ill concealed his evident admiration of the calm figure before him — "I knew the partikler style of d—n fool that you was, and expected no better. Good by, then — God Almighty! who 's that?"

He was on his way to the open French window, but had started back, his face quite white and bloodless, and his eyes staring. Islington ran to the window, and looked out. A white skirt vanished around the corner of the veranda. When he returned, Bill had dropped into a chair.

"It must have been Miss Masterman, I think; but what 's the matter?"

"Nothing," said Bill, faintly; "have you got any whiskey handy?"

Islington brought a decanter, and, pouring out some spirits, handed the glass to Bill. Bill drained it, and then said, "Who is Miss Masterman?"

"Mr. Masterman's daughter; that is, an adopted daughter, I believe."

"Wot name?"

"I really don't know," said Islington, pettishly, more vexed than he cared to own at this questioning.

Yuba Bill rose and walked to the window,

closed it, walked back again to the door, glanced at Islington, hesitated, and then returned to his chair.

"I did n't tell you I was married, — did I?" he said suddenly, looking up in Islington's face with an unsuccessful attempt at a reckless laugh.

"No," said Islington, more pained at the manner than the words.

"Fact," said Yuba Bill. "Three years ago it was, Tommy, — three years ago!"

He looked so hard at Islington, that, feeling he was expected to say something, he asked vaguely, "Who did you marry?"

"Thet 's it!" said Yuba Bill; "I can't ezactly say; partikly, though, a she devil! generally, the wife of half a dozen other men."

Accustomed, apparently, to have his conjugal infelicities a theme of mirth among men, and seeing no trace of amusement on Islington's grave face, his dogged, reckless manner softened, and, drawing his chair closer to Islington, he went on: "It all began outer this: we was coming down Watson's grade one night pretty free, when the expressman turns to me and sez, 'There 's a row inside, and you 'd better pull up!' I pulls up, and out hops, first a woman, and then two or three chaps swearing and cursin', and tryin' to drag some one arter them. Then it 'pear'd, Tommy, thet it was this woman's drunken husband they was go-

ing to put out for abusin' her, and strikin' her in the coach; and if it had n't been for me, my boy, they 'd hev left that chap thar in the road. But I fixes matters up by putting her alongside o' me on the box, and we drove on. She was very white, Tommy, — for the matter o' that, she was always one o' these very white women, that never got red in the face, — but she never cried a whimper. Most wimin would have cried. It was queer, but she never cried. I thought so at the time.

"She was very tall, with a lot o' light hair meandering down the back of her head, as long as a deer-skin whip-lash, and about the color. She hed eyes thet 'd bore you through at fifty yards, and pooty hands and feet. And when she kinder got out o' that stiff, narvous state she was in, and warmed up a little, and got chipper, by G—d, sir, she was handsome, — she was that!"

A little flushed and embarrassed at his own enthusiasm, he stopped, and then said, carelessly, "They got off at Murphy's."

"Well," said Islington.

"Well, I used to see her often arter thet, and when she was alone she allus took the box-seat. She kinder confided her troubles to me, how her husband got drunk and abused her; and I did n't see much o' him, for he was away in 'Frisco arter thet. But it was all square, Tommy, — all square 'twixt me and her.

"I got a going there a good deal, and then one day I sez to myself, 'Bill, this won't do,' and I got changed to another route. Did you ever know Jackson Filltree, Tommy?" said Bill, breaking off suddenly.

"No."

"Might have heerd of him, p'r'aps?"

"No," said Islington, impatiently.

"Jackson Filltree ran the express from White's out to Summit, 'cross the North Fork of the Yuba. One day he sez to me, 'Bill, that 's a mighty bad ford at the North Fork.' I sez, 'I believe you, Jackson.' 'It 'll git me some day, Bill, sure,' sez he. I sez, 'Why don't you take the lower ford?' 'I don't know,' sez he, 'but I can't.' So ever after, when I met him, he sez, 'That North Fork ain't got me yet.' One day I was in Sacramento, and up comes Filltree. He sez, 'I 've sold out the express business on account of the North Fork, but it 's bound to get me yet, Bill, sure'; and he laughs. Two weeks after they finds his body below the ford, whar he tried to cross, comin' down from the Summit way. Folks said it was foolishness: Tommy, I sez it was Fate! The second day arter I was changed to the Placerville route, thet woman comes outer the hotel above the stage-office. Her husband, she said, was lying sick in Placerville; that 's what she said; but it was Fate, Tommy, Fate. Three months afterward, her husband takes

an overdose of morphine for delirium tremens, and dies. There 's folks ez sez she gave it to him, but it 's Fate. A year after that I married her, — Fate, Tommy, Fate!

"I lived with her jest three months," he went on, after a long breath, — "three months! It ain't much time for a happy man. I 've seen a good deal o' hard life in my day, but there was days in that three months longer than any day in my life, — days, Tommy, when it was a toss-up whether I should kill her or she me. But thar, I 'm done. You are a young man, Tommy, and I ain't goin' to tell things thet, old as I am, three years ago I could n't have believed."

When at last, with his grim face turned toward the window, he sat silently with his clinched hands on his knees before him, Islington asked where his wife was now.

"Ask me no more, my boy, — no more. I 've said my say." With a gesture as of throwing down a pair of reins before him, he rose, and walked to the window.

"You kin understand, Tommy, why a little trip around the world 'ud do me good. Ef you can't go with me, well and good. But go I must."

"Not before luncheon, I hope," said a very sweet voice, as Blanche Masterman suddenly stood before them. "Father would never forgive me if in his absence I permitted one of Mr. Islington's friends

to go in this way. You will stay, won't you? Do! And you will give me your arm now; and when Mr. Islington has done staring, he will follow us into the dining-room and introduce you."

"I have quite fallen in love with your friend," said Miss Blanche, as they stood in the drawing-room looking at the figure of Bill, strolling, with his short pipe in his mouth, through the distant shrubbery. "He asks very queer questions, though. He wanted to know my mother's maiden name."

"He is an honest fellow," said Islington, gravely.

"You are very much subdued. You don't thank me, I dare say, for keeping you and your friend here; but you could n't go, you know, until father returned."

Islington smiled, but not very gayly.

"And then I think it much better for us to part here under these frescos, don't you? Good by."

She extended her long, slim hand.

"Out in the sunlight there, when my eyes were red, you were very anxious to look at me," she added, in a dangerous voice.

Islington raised his sad eyes to hers. Something glittering upon her own sweet lashes trembled and fell.

"Blanche!"

She was rosy enough now, and would have withdrawn her hand, but Islington detained it. She was not quite certain but that her waist was also

in jeopardy. Yet she could not help saying, "Are you sure that there is n't anything in the way of a young woman that would keep you?"

"Blanche!" said Islington in reproachful horror.

"If gentlemen will roar out their secrets before an open window, with a young woman lying on a sofa on the veranda, reading a stupid French novel, they must not be surprised if she gives more attention to them than her book."

"Then you know all, Blanche?"

"I know," said Blanche, "let 's see — I know the partiklar style of — ahem! — fool you was, and expected no better. Good by." And, gliding like a lovely and innocent milk snake out of his grasp, she slipped away.

To the pleasant ripple of waves, the sound of music and light voices, the yellow midsummer moon again rose over Greyport. It looked upon formless masses of rock and shrubbery, wide spaces of lawn and beach, and a shimmering expanse of water. It singled out particular objects, — a white sail in shore, a crystal globe upon the lawn, and flashed upon something held between the teeth of a crouching figure scaling the low wall of Cliffwood Lodge. Then, as a man and woman passed out from under the shadows of the foliage into the open moonlight of the garden path, the figure leaped from the wall, and stood erect and waiting in the shadow.

It was the figure of an old man, with rolling eyes, his trembling hand grasping a long, keen knife, — a figure more pitiable than pitiless, more pathetic than terrible. But the next moment the knife was stricken from his hand, and he struggled in the firm grasp of another figure that apparently sprang from the wall beside him.

"D—n you, Masterman!" cried the old man, hoarsely; "give me fair play, and I'll kill you yet!"

"Which my name is Yuba Bill," said Bill, quietly, "and it's time this d—n fooling was stopped."

The old man glared in Bill's face savagely. "I know you. You 're one of Masterman's friends, — d—n you, — let me go till I cut his heart out, — let me go! Where is my Mary? — where is my wife? — there she is! there! — there! — there! Mary!" He would have screamed, but Bill placed his powerful hand upon his mouth, as he turned in the direction of the old man's glance. Distinct in the moonlight the figures of Islington and Blanche, arm in arm, stood out upon the garden path.

"Give me my wife!" muttered the old man hoarsely, between Bill's fingers. "Where is she?"

A sudden fury passed over Yuba Bill's face. "Where is your wife?" he echoed, pressing the old man back against the garden wall, and holding him

there as in a vice. "Where is your wife?" he repeated, thrusting his grim sardonic jaw and savage eyes into the old man's frightened face. "Where is Jack Adam's wife? Where is MY wife? Where is the she-devil that drove one man mad, that sent another to hell by his own hand, that eternally broke and ruined me? Where! Where! Do you ask where? In jail in Sacramento,— in jail, do you hear?— in jail for murder, Johnson,— murder!"

The old man gasped, stiffened, and then, relaxing, suddenly slipped, a mere inanimate mass, at Yuba Bill's feet. With a sudden revulsion of feeling, Yuba Bill dropped at his side, and, lifting him tenderly in his arms, whispered, "Look up, old man, Johnson! look up, for God's sake!— it 's me,— Yuba Bill! and yonder is your daughter, and— Tommy!— don't you know— Tommy, little Tommy Islington?"

Johnson's eyes slowly opened. He whispered, "Tommy! yes, Tommy! Sit by me, Tommy. But don't sit so near the bank. Don't you see how the river is rising and beckoning to me,— hissing, and boilin' over the rocks? It 's gittin higher!— hold me, Tommy,— hold me, and don't let me go yet. We 'll live to cut his heart out, Tommy,— we 'll live— we 'll—" His head sank, and the rushing river, invisible to all eyes save his, leaped toward him out of the darkness, and bore him away, no longer to the darkness, but through it to the distant, peaceful, shining sea.

HOW SANTA CLAUS CAME TO SIMPSON'S BAR.

IT had been raining in the valley of the Sacramento. The North Fork had overflowed its banks and Rattlesnake Creek was impassable. The few boulders that had marked the summer ford at Simpson's Crossing were obliterated by a vast sheet of water stretching to the foothills. The up stage was stopped at Grangers; the last mail had been abandoned in the *tules*, the rider swimming for his life. "An area," remarked the "Sierra Avalanche," with pensive local pride, "as large as the State of Massachusetts is now under water."

Nor was the weather any better in the foothills. The mud lay deep on the mountain road; wagons that neither physical force nor moral objurgation could move from the evil ways into which they had fallen, encumbered the track, and the way to Simpson's Bar was indicated by broken-down teams and hard swearing. And farther on, cut off and inaccessible, rained upon and bedraggled, smitten by high winds and threatened by high water, Simpson's Bar, on the eve of Christmas day, 1862, clung like a swallow's nest to the rocky

entablature and splintered capitals of Table Mountain, and shook in the blast.

As night shut down on the settlement, a few lights gleamed through the mist from the windows of cabins on either side of the highway now crossed and gullied by lawless streams and swept by marauding winds. Happily most of the population were gathered at Thompson's store, clustered around a red-hot stove, at which they silently spat in some accepted sense of social communion that perhaps rendered conversation unnecessary. Indeed, most methods of diversion had long since been exhausted on Simpson's Bar; high water had suspended the regular occupations on gulch and on river, and a consequent lack of money and whiskey had taken the zest from most illegitimate recreation. Even Mr. Hamlin was fain to leave the Bar with fifty dollars in his pocket, — the only amount actually realized of the large sums won by him in the successful exercise of his arduous profession. "Ef I was asked," he remarked somewhat later, — "ef I was asked to pint out a purty little village where a retired sport as did n't care for money could exercise hisself, frequent and lively, I 'd say Simpson's Bar; but for a young man with a large family depending on his exertions, it don't pay." As Mr. Hamlin's family consisted mainly of female adults, this remark is quoted rather to show the breadth of

his humor than the exact extent of his responsibilities.

Howbeit, the unconscious objects of this satire sat that evening in the listless apathy begotten of idleness and lack of excitement. Even the sudden splashing of hoofs before the door did not arouse them. Dick Bullen alone paused in the act of scraping out his pipe, and lifted his head, but no other one of the group indicated any interest in, or recognition of, the man who entered.

It was a figure familiar enough to the company, and known in Simpson's Bar as "The Old Man." A man of perhaps fifty years; grizzled and scant of hair, but still fresh and youthful of complexion. A face full of ready, but not very powerful sympathy, with a chameleon-like aptitude for taking on the shade and color of contiguous moods and feelings. He had evidently just left some hilarious companions, and did not at first notice the gravity of the group, but clapped the shoulder of the nearest man jocularly, and threw himself into a vacant chair.

"Jest heard the best thing out, boys! Ye know Smiley, over yar, — Jim Smiley, — funniest man in the Bar? Well, Jim was jest telling the richest yarn about —"

"Smiley 's a —— fool," interrupted a gloomy voice.

"A particular —— skunk," added another in sepulchral accents.

A silence followed these positive statements. The Old Man glanced quickly around the group. Then his face slowly changed. "That 's so," he said reflectively, after a pause, "certingly a sort of a skunk and suthin of a fool. In course." He was silent for a moment as in painful contemplation of the unsavoriness and folly of the unpopular Smiley. "Dismal weather, ain't it?" he added, now fully embarked on the current of prevailing sentiment. "Mighty rough papers on the boys, and no show for money this season. And to-morrow 's Christmas."

There was a movement among the men at this announcement, but whether of satisfaction or disgust was not plain. "Yes," continued the Old Man in the lugubrious tone he had, within the last few moments, unconsciously adopted, — "yes, Christmas, and to-night 's Christmas eve. Ye see, boys, I kinder thought — that is, I sorter had an idee, jest passin' like, you know — that may be ye 'd all like to come over to my house to-night and have a sort of tear round. But I suppose, now, you would n't? Don't feel like it, may be?" he added with anxious sympathy, peering into the faces of his companions.

"Well, I don't know," responded Tom Flynn with some cheerfulness. "P'r'aps we may. But how about your wife, Old Man? What does *she* say to it?"

The Old Man hesitated. His conjugal experience had not been a happy one, and the fact was known to Simpson's Bar. His first wife, a delicate, pretty little woman, had suffered keenly and secretly from the jealous suspicions of her husband, until one day he invited the whole Bar to his house to expose her infidelity. On arriving, the party found the shy, *petite* creature quietly engaged in her household duties, and retired abashed and discomfited. But the sensitive woman did not easily recover from the shock of this extraordinary outrage. It was with difficulty she regained her equanimity sufficiently to release her lover from the closet in which he was concealed and escape with him. She left a boy of three years to comfort her bereaved husband. The Old Man's present wife had been his cook. She was large, loyal, and aggressive.

Before he could reply, Joe Dimmick suggested with great directness that it was the "Old Man's house," and that, invoking the Divine Power, if the case were his own, he would invite whom he pleased, even if in so doing he imperilled his salvation. The Powers of Evil, he further remarked, should contend against him vainly. All this delivered with a terseness and vigor lost in this necessary translation.

"In course. Certainly. Thet 's it," said the Old Man with a sympathetic frown. "Thar 's no

trouble about *thet.* It 's my own house, built every stick on it myself. Don't you be afeard o' her, boys. She *may* cut up a trifle rough, — ez wimmin do, — but she 'll come round." Secretly the Old Man trusted to the exaltation of liquor and the power of courageous example to sustain him in such an emergency.

As yet, Dick Bullen, the oracle and leader of Simpson's Bar, had not spoken. He now took his pipe from his lips. "Old Man, how 's that yer Johnny gettin' on? Seems to me he did n't look so peart last time I seed him on the bluff heavin' rocks at Chinamen. Did n't seem to take much interest in it. Thar was a gang of 'em by yar yesterday, — drownded out up the river, — and I kinder thought o' Johnny, and how he 'd miss 'em! May be now, we 'd be in the way ef he wus sick?"

The father, evidently touched not only by this pathetic picture of Johnny's deprivation, but by the considerate delicacy of the speaker, hastened to assure him that Johnny was better and that a "little fun might 'liven him up." Whereupon Dick arose, shook himself, and saying, "I 'm ready. Lead the way, Old Man: here goes," himself led the way with a leap, a characteristic howl, and darted out into the night. As he passed through the outer room he caught up a blazing brand from the hearth. The action was repeated by the rest of the party, closely following and elbowing each

other, and before the astonished proprietor of Thompson's grocery was aware of the intention of his guests, the room was deserted.

The night was pitchy dark. In the first gust of wind their temporary torches were extinguished, and only the red brands dancing and flitting in the gloom like drunken will-o'-the-wisps indicated their whereabouts. Their way led up Pine-Tree Cañon, at the head of which a broad, low, bark-thatched cabin burrowed in the mountain-side. It was the home of the Old Man, and the entrance to the tunnel in which he worked when he worked at all. Here the crowd paused for a moment, out of delicate deference to their host, who came up panting in the rear.

"P'r'aps ye 'd better hold on a second out yer, whilst I go in and see thet things is all right," said the Old Man, with an indifference he was far from feeling. The suggestion was graciously accepted, the door opened and closed on the host, and the crowd, leaning their backs against the wall and cowering under the eaves, waited and listened.

For a few moments there was no sound but the dripping of water from the eaves, and the stir and rustle of wrestling boughs above them. Then the men became uneasy, and whispered suggestion and suspicion passed from the one to the other. "Reckon she 's caved in his head the first lick!" "Decoyed him inter the tunnel and barred him

up, likely." "Got him down and sittin' on him." "Prob'ly bilin suthin to heave on us: stand clear the door, boys!" For just then the latch clicked, the door slowly opened, and a voice said, "Come in out o' the wet."

The voice was neither that of the Old Man nor of his wife. It was the voice of a small boy, its weak treble broken by that preternatural hoarseness which only vagabondage and the habit of premature self-assertion can give. It was the face of a small boy that looked up at theirs, — a face that might have been pretty and even refined but that it was darkened by evil knowledge from within, and dirt and hard experience from without. He had a blanket around his shoulders and had evidently just risen from his bed. "Come in," he repeated, "and don't make no noise. The Old Man 's in there talking to mar," he continued, pointing to an adjacent room which seemed to be a kitchen, from which the Old Man's voice came in deprecating accents. "Let me be," he added, querulously, to Dick Bullen, who had caught him up, blanket and all, and was affecting to toss him into the fire, "let go o' me, you d—d old fool, d' ye hear?"

Thus adjured, Dick Bullen lowered Johnny to the ground with a smothered laugh, while the men, entering quietly, ranged themselves around a long table of rough boards which occupied the centre of the room. Johnny then gravely pro-

ceeded to a cupboard and brought out several articles which he deposited on the table. "Thar 's whiskey. And crackers. And red herons. And cheese." He took a bite of the latter on his way to the table. "And sugar." He scooped up a mouthful *en route* with a small and very dirty hand. "And terbacker. Thar 's dried appils too on the shelf, but I don't admire 'em. Appils is swellin'. Thar," he concluded, "now wade in, and don't be afeard. *I* don't mind the old woman. She don't b'long to *me*. S'long."

He had stepped to the threshold of a small room, scarcely larger than a closet, partitioned off from the main apartment, and holding in its dim recess a small bed. He stood there a moment looking at the company, his bare feet peeping from the blanket, and nodded.

"Hello, Johnny! You ain't goin' to turn in agin, are ye?" said Dick.

"Yes, I are," responded Johnny, decidedly.

"Why, wot 's up, old fellow?"

"I 'm sick."

"How sick?"

"I 've got a fevier. And childblains. And roomatiz," returned Johnny, and vanished within. After a moment's pause, he added in the dark, apparently from under the bedclothes, — "And biles!"

There was an embarrassing silence. The men

looked at each other, and at the fire. Even with the appetizing banquet before them, it seemed as if they might again fall into the despondency of Thompson's grocery, when the voice of the Old Man, incautiously lifted, came deprecatingly from the kitchen.

"Certainly! Thet's so. In course they is. A gang o' lazy drunken loafers, and that ar Dick Bullen's the ornariest of all. Did n't hev no more *sabe* than to come round yar with sickness in the house and no provision. Thet's what I said: 'Bullen,' sez I, 'it's crazy drunk you are, or a fool,' sez I, 'to think o' such a thing.' 'Staples,' I sez, 'be you a man, Staples, and 'spect to raise h—ll under my roof and invalids lyin' round?' But they would come,—they would. Thet 's wot you must 'spect o' such trash as lays round the Bar."

A burst of laughter from the men followed this unfortunate exposure. Whether it was overheard in the kitchen, or whether the Old Man's irate companion had just then exhausted all other modes of expressing her contemptuous indignation, I cannot say, but a back door was suddenly slammed with great violence. A moment later and the Old Man reappeared, haply unconscious of the cause of the late hilarious outburst, and smiled blandly.

"The old woman thought she 'd jest run over to Mrs McFadden's for a sociable call," he explained,

with jaunty indifference, as he took a seat at the board.

Oddly enough it needed this untoward incident to relieve the embarrassment that was beginning to be felt by the party, and their natural audacity returned with their host. I do not propose to record the convivialities of that evening. The inquisitive reader will accept the statement that the conversation was characterized by the same intellectual exaltation, the same cautious reverence, the same fastidious delicacy, the same rhetorical precision, and the same logical and coherent discourse somewhat later in the evening, which distinguish similar gatherings of the masculine sex in more civilized localities and under more favorable auspices. No glasses were broken in the absence of any; no liquor was uselessly spilt on floor or table in the scarcity of that article.

It was nearly midnight when the festivities were interrupted. "Hush," said Dick Bullen, holding up his hand. It was the querulous voice of Johnny from his adjacent closet: "O dad!"

The Old Man arose hurriedly and disappeared in the closet. Presently he reappeared. "His rheumatiz is coming on agin bad," he explained, "and he wants rubbin'." He lifted the demijohn of whiskey from the table and shook it. It was empty. Dick Bullen put down his tin cup with an embarrassed laugh. So did the others. The

Old Man examined their contents and said hopefully, "I reckon that 's enough; he don't need much. You hold on all o' you for a spell, and I 'll be back"; and vanished in the closet with an old flannel shirt and the whiskey. The door closed but imperfectly, and the following dialogue was distinctly audible: —

"Now, sonny, whar does she ache worst?"

"Sometimes over yar and sometimes under yer; but it 's most powerful from yer to yer. Rub yer, dad."

A silence seemed to indicate a brisk rubbing. Then Johnny:

"Hevin' a good time out yer, dad?"

"Yes, sonny."

"To-morrer 's Chrismiss, — ain't it?"

"Yes, sonny. How does she feel now?"

"Better. Rub a little furder down. Wot 's Chrismiss, anyway? Wot 's it all about?"

"O, it 's a day."

This exhaustive definition was apparently satisfactory, for there was a silent interval of rubbing. Presently Johnny again:

"Mar sez that everywhere else but yer everybody gives things to everybody Chrismiss, and then she jist waded inter you. She sez thar 's a man they call Sandy Claws, not a white man, you know, but a kind o' Chinemin, comes down the chimbley night afore Chrismiss and gives things

to chillern, — boys like me. Puts 'em in their butes! Thet 's what she tried to play upon me. Easy now, pop, whar are you rubbin' to, — thet 's a mile from the place. She jest made that up, did n't she, jest to aggrewate me and you? Don't rub thar. . . . . Why, dad!"

In the great quiet that seemed to have fallen upon the house the sigh of the near pines and the drip of leaves without was very distinct. Johnny's voice, too, was lowered as he went on, "Don't you take on now, fur I 'm gettin' all right fast. Wot 's the boys doin' out thar?"

The Old Man partly opened the door and peered through. His guests were sitting there sociably enough, and there were a few silver coins and a lean buckskin purse on the table. "Bettin' on suthin, — some little game or 'nother. They 're all right," he replied to Johnny, and recommenced his rubbing.

"I 'd like to take a hand and win some money," said Johnny, reflectively, after a pause.

The Old Man glibly repeated what was evidently a familiar formula, that if Johnny would wait until he struck it rich in the tunnel he 'd have lots of money, etc., etc.

"Yes," said Johnny, "but you don't. And whether you strike it or I win it, it 's about the same. It 's all luck. But it 's mighty cur'o's about Chrismiss, — ain't it? Why do they call it Chrismiss?"

Perhaps from some instinctive deference to the overhearing of his guests, or from some vague sense of incongruity, the Old Man's reply was so low as to be inaudible beyond the room.

"Yes," said Johnny, with some slight abatement of interest, "I 've heerd o' *him* before. Thar, that 'll do, dad. I don't ache near so bad as I did. Now wrap me tight in this yer blanket. So. Now," he added in a muffled whisper, "sit down yer by me till I go asleep." To assure himself of obedience, he disengaged one hand from the blanket and, grasping his father's sleeve, again composed himself to rest.

For some moments the Old Man waited patiently. Then the unwonted stillness of the house excited his curiosity, and without moving from the bed, he cautiously opened the door with his disengaged hand, and looked into the main room. To his infinite surprise it was dark and deserted. But even then a smouldering log on the hearth broke, and by the upspringing blaze he saw the figure of Dick Bullen sitting by the dying embers.

"Hello!"

Dick started, rose, and came somewhat unsteadily toward him.

"Whar 's the boys?" said the Old Man.

"Gone up the cañon on a little *pasear*. They 're coming back for me in a minit. I'm waitin' round for 'em. What are you starin' at, Old Man?"

he added with a forced laugh; "do you think I 'm drunk?"

The Old Man might have been pardoned the supposition, for Dick's eyes were humid and his face flushed. He loitered and lounged back to the chimney, yawned, shook himself, buttoned up his coat and laughed. "Liquor ain't so plenty as that, Old Man. Now don't you git up," he continued, as the Old Man made a movement to release his sleeve from Johnny's hand. "Don't you mind manners. Sit jest whar you be; I 'm goin' in a jiffy. Thar, that 's them now."

There was a low tap at the door. Dick Bullen opened it quickly, nodded "Good night" to his host, and disappeared. The Old Man would have followed him but for the hand that still unconsciously grasped his sleeve. He could have easily disengaged it: it was small, weak, and emaciated. But perhaps because it *was* small, weak, and emaciated, he changed his mind, and, drawing his chair closer to the bed, rested his head upon it. In this defenceless attitude the potency of his earlier potations surprised him. The room flickered and faded before his eyes, reappeared, faded again, went out, and left him — asleep.

Meantime Dick Bullen, closing the door, confronted his companions. "Are you ready?" said Staples. "Ready," said Dick; "what 's the time?" "Past twelve," was the reply; "can you make it?

— it 's nigh on fifty miles, the round trip hither and yon." "I reckon," returned Dick, shortly. "Whar 's the mare?" "Bill and Jack 's holdin' her at the crossin'." "Let 'em hold on a minit longer," said Dick.

He turned and re-entered the house softly. By the light of the guttering candle and dying fire he saw that the door of the little room was open. He stepped toward it on tiptoe and looked in. The Old Man had fallen back in his chair, snoring, his helpless feet thrust out in a line with his collapsed shoulders, and his hat pulled over his eyes. Beside him, on a narrow wooden bedstead, lay Johnny, muffled tightly in a blanket that hid all save a strip of forehead and a few curls damp with perspiration. Dick Bullen made a step forward, hesitated, and glanced over his shoulder into the deserted room. Everything was quiet. With a sudden resolution he parted his huge mustaches with both hands and stooped over the sleeping boy. But even as he did so a mischievous blast, lying in wait, swooped down the chimney, rekindled the hearth, and lit up the room with a shameless glow from which Dick fled in bashful terror.

His companions were already waiting for him at the crossing. Two of them were struggling in the darkness with some strange misshapen bulk, which as Dick came nearer took the semblance of a great yellow horse.

It was the mare. She was not a pretty picture. From her Roman nose to her rising haunches, from her arched spine hidden by the stiff *machillas* of a Mexican saddle, to her thick, straight, bony legs, there was not a line of equine grace. In her half-blind but wholly vicious white eyes, in her protruding under lip, in her monstrous color, there was nothing but ugliness and vice.

"Now then," said Staples, "stand cl'ar of her heels, boys, and up with you. Don't miss your first holt of her mane, and mind ye get your off stirrup *quick*. Ready!"

There was a leap, a scrambling struggle, a bound, a wild retreat of the crowd, a circle of flying hoofs, two springless leaps that jarred the earth, a rapid play and jingle of spurs, a plunge, and then the voice of Dick somewhere in the darkness, "All right!"

"Don't take the lower road back onless you 're hard pushed for time! Don't hold her in down hill! We 'll be at the ford at five. G' lang! Hoopa! Mula! GO!"

A splash, a spark struck from the ledge in the road, a clatter in the rocky cut beyond, and Dick was gone.

. . . . .

Sing, O Muse, the ride of Richard Bullen! Sing, O Muse of chivalrous men! the sacred quest, the doughty deeds, the battery of low churls, the fear-

some ride and grewsome perils of the Flower of Simpson's Bar! Alack! she is dainty, this Muse! She will have none of this bucking brute and swaggering, ragged rider, and I must fain follow him in prose, afoot!

It was one o'clock, and yet he had only gained Rattlesnake Hill. For in that time Jovita had rehearsed to him all her imperfections and practised all her vices. Thrice had she stumbled. Twice had she thrown up her Roman nose in a straight line with the reins, and, resisting bit and spur, struck out madly across country. Twice had she reared, and, rearing, fallen backward; and twice had the agile Dick, unharmed, regained his seat before she found her vicious legs again. And a mile beyond them, at the foot of a long hill, was Rattlesnake Creek. Dick knew that here was the crucial test of his ability to perform his enterprise, set his teeth grimly, put his knees well into her flanks, and changed his defensive tactics to brisk aggression. Bullied and maddened, Jovita began the descent of the hill. Here the artful Richard pretended to hold her in with ostentatious objurgation and well-feigned cries of alarm. It is unnecessary to add that Jovita instantly ran away. Nor need I state the time made in the descent; it is written in the chronicles of Simpson's Bar. Enough that in another moment, as it seemed to Dick, she was splashing on the overflowed banks

of Rattlesnake Creek. As Dick expected, the momentum she had acquired carried her beyond the point of balking, and, holding her well together for a mighty leap, they dashed into the middle of the swiftly flowing current. A few moments of kicking, wading, and swimming, and Dick drew a long breath on the opposite bank.

The road from Rattlesnake Creek to Red Mountain was tolerably level. Either the plunge in Rattlesnake Creek had dampened her baleful fire, or the art which led to it had shown her the superior wickedness of her rider, for Jovita no longer wasted her surplus energy in wanton conceits. Once she bucked, but it was from force of habit; once she shied, but it was from a new freshly painted meeting-house at the crossing of the county road. Hollows, ditches, gravelly deposits, patches of freshly springing grasses, flew from beneath her rattling hoofs. She began to smell unpleasantly, once or twice she coughed slightly, but there was no abatement of her strength or speed. By two o'clock he had passed Red Mountain and begun the descent to the plain. Ten minutes later the driver of the fast Pioneer coach was overtaken and passed by a "man on a Pinto hoss," — an event sufficiently notable for remark. At half past two Dick rose in his stirrups with a great shout. Stars were glittering through the rifted clouds, and beyond him, out of the plain, rose two spires, a

flagstaff, and a straggling line of black objects. Dick jingled his spurs and swung his *riata*, Jovita bounded forward, and in another moment they swept into Tuttleville and drew up before the wooden piazza of "The Hotel of All Nations."

What transpired that night at Tuttleville is not strictly a part of this record. Briefly I may state, however, that after Jovita had been handed over to a sleepy ostler, whom she at once kicked into unpleasant consciousness, Dick sallied out with the bar-keeper for a tour of the sleeping town. Lights still gleamed from a few saloons and gambling-houses; but, avoiding these, they stopped before several closed shops, and by persistent tapping and judicious outcry roused the proprietors from their beds, and made them unbar the doors of their magazines and expose their wares. Sometimes they were met by curses, but oftener by interest and some concern in their needs, and the interview was invariably concluded by a drink. It was three o'clock before this pleasantry was given over, and with a small waterproof bag of india-rubber strapped on his shoulders Dick returned to the hotel. But here he was waylaid by Beauty, — Beauty opulent in charms, affluent in dress, persuasive in speech, and Spanish in accent. In vain she repeated the invitation in "Excelsior," happily scorned by all Alpine-climbing youth, and rejected by this child of the Sierras, — a rejection

softened in this instance by a laugh and his last gold coin. And then he sprang to the saddle and dashed down the lonely street and out into the lonelier plain, where presently the lights, the black line of houses, the spires, and the flagstaff sank into the earth behind him again and were lost in the distance.

The storm had cleared away, the air was brisk and cold, the outlines of adjacent landmarks were distinct, but it was half past four before Dick reached the meeting-house and the crossing of the county road. To avoid the rising grade he had taken a longer and more circuitous road, in whose viscid mud Jovita sank fetlock deep at every bound. It was a poor preparation for a steady ascent of five miles more; but Jovita, gathering her legs under her, took it with her usual blind, unreasoning fury, and a half-hour later reached the long level that led to Rattlesnake Creek. Another half-hour would bring him to the creek. He threw the reins lightly upon the neck of the mare, chirruped to her, and began to sing.

Suddenly Jovita shied with a bound that would have unseated a less practised rider. Hanging to her rein was a figure that had leaped from the bank, and at the same time from the road before her arose a shadowy horse and rider. "Throw up your hands," commanded this second apparition, with an oath.

Dick felt the mare tremble, quiver, and apparently sink under him. He knew what it meant and was prepared.

"Stand aside, Jack Simpson, I know you, you d—d thief. Let me pass or — "

He did not finish the sentence. Jovita rose straight in the air with a terrific bound, throwing the figure from her bit with a single shake of her vicious head, and charged with deadly malevolence down on the impediment before her. An oath, a pistol-shot, horse and highwayman rolled over in the road, and the next moment Jovita was a hundred yards away. But the good right arm of her rider, shattered by a bullet, dropped helplessly at his side.

Without slacking his speed he shifted the reins to his left hand. But a few moments later he was obliged to halt and tighten the saddle-girths that had slipped in the onset. This in his crippled condition took some time. He had no fear of pursuit, but looking up he saw that the eastern stars were already paling, and that the distant peaks had lost their ghostly whiteness, and now stood out blackly against a lighter sky. Day was upon him. Then completely absorbed in a single idea, he forgot the pain of his wound, and mounting again dashed on toward Rattlesnake Creek. But now Jovita's breath came broken by gasps, Dick reeled in his saddle, and brighter and brighter grew the sky.

Ride, Richard; run, Jovita; linger, O day!

For the last few rods there was a roaring in his ears. Was it exhaustion from loss of blood, or what? He was dazed and giddy as he swept down the hill, and did not recognize his surroundings. Had he taken the wrong road, or was this Rattlesnake Creek?

It was. But the brawling creek he had swam a few hours before had risen, more than doubled its volume, and now rolled a swift and resistless river between him and Rattlesnake Hill. For the first time that night Richard's heart sank within him. The river, the mountain, the quickening east, swam before his eyes. He shut them to recover his self-control. In that brief interval, by some fantastic mental process, the little room at Simpson's Bar and the figures of the sleeping father and son rose upon him. He opened his eyes wildly, cast off his coat, pistol, boots, and saddle, bound his precious pack tightly to his shoulders, grasped the bare flanks of Jovita with his bared knees, and with a shout dashed into the yellow water. A cry rose from the opposite bank as the head of a man and horse struggled for a few moments against the battling current, and then were swept away amidst uprooted trees and whirling drift-wood.

. . . . . .

The Old Man started and woke. The fire on

the hearth was dead, the candle in the outer room flickering in its socket, and somebody was rapping at the door. He opened it, but fell back with a cry before the dripping, half-naked figure that reeled against the doorpost.

"Dick?"

"Hush! Is he awake yet?"

"No, — but, Dick? — "

"Dry up, you old fool! Get me some whiskey *quick!*" The Old Man flew and returned with — an empty bottle! Dick would have sworn, but his strength was not equal to the occasion. He staggered, caught at the handle of the door, and motioned to the Old Man.

"Thar 's suthin' in my pack yer for Johnny. Take it off. I can't."

The Old Man unstrapped the pack and laid it before the exhausted man.

"Open it, quick!"

He did so with trembling fingers. It contained only a few poor toys, — cheap and barbaric enough, goodness knows, but bright with paint and tinsel. One of them was broken; another, I fear, was irretrievably ruined by water; and on the third — ah me! there was a cruel spot.

"It don't look like much, that 's a fact," said Dick, ruefully. . . . . "But it 's the best we could do. . . . . Take 'em, Old Man, and put 'em in his stocking, and tell him — tell him, you know —

hold me, Old Man — " The Old Man caught at his sinking figure. " Tell him," said Dick, with a weak little laugh, — " tell him Sandy Claus has come."

And even so, bedraggled, ragged, unshaven, and unshorn, with one arm hanging helplessly at his side, Santa Claus came to Simpson's Bar and fell fainting on the first threshold. The Christmas dawn came slowly after, touching the remoter peaks with the rosy warmth of ineffable love. And it looked so tenderly on Simpson's Bar that the whole mountain, as if caught in a generous action, blushed to the skies.

THE PRINCESS BOB AND HER FRIENDS.

SHE was a Klamath Indian. Her title was, I think, a compromise between her claim as daughter of a chief, and gratitude to her earliest white protector, whose name, after the Indian fashion, she had adopted. "Bob" Walker had taken her from the breast of her dead mother at a time when the sincere volunteer soldiery of the California frontier were impressed with the belief that extermination was the manifest destiny of the Indian race. He had with difficulty restrained the noble zeal of his compatriots long enough to convince them that the exemption of one Indian baby would not invalidate this theory. And he took her to his home, — a pastoral clearing on the banks of the Salmon River, — where she was cared for after a frontier fashion.

Before she was nine years old, she had exhausted the scant kindliness of the thin, overworked Mrs. Walker. As a playfellow of the young Walkers she was unreliable; as a nurse for the baby she was inefficient. She lost the former in the trackless depths of a redwood forest; she basely abandoned the latter in an extemporized cradle, hang-

ing like a chrysalis to a convenient bough. She lied and she stole, — two unpardonable sins in a frontier community, where truth was a necessity and provisions were the only property. Worse than this, the outskirts of the clearing were sometimes haunted by blanketed tatterdemalions with whom she had mysterious confidences. Mr. Walker more than once regretted his indiscreet humanity; but she presently relieved him of responsibility, and possibly of bloodguiltiness, by disappearing entirely.

When she reappeared, it was at the adjacent village of Logport, in the capacity of housemaid to a trader's wife, who, joining some little culture to considerable conscientiousness, attempted to instruct her charge. But the Princess proved an unsatisfactory pupil to even so liberal a teacher. She accepted the alphabet with great good-humor, but always as a pleasing and recurring novelty, in which all interest expired at the completion of each lesson. She found a thousand uses for her books and writing materials other than those known to civilized children. She made a curious necklace of bits of slate-pencil, she constructed a miniature canoe from the pasteboard covers of her primer, she bent her pens into fish-hooks, and tattooed the faces of her younger companions with blue ink. Religious instruction she received as good-humoredly, and learned to pronounce the

name of the Deity with a cheerful familiarity that shocked her preceptress. Nor could her reverence be reached through analogy; she knew nothing of the Great Spirit, and professed entire ignorance of the Happy Hunting-Grounds. Yet she attended divine service regularly, and as regularly asked for a hymn-book; and it was only through the discovery that she had collected twenty-five of these volumes and had hidden them behind the woodpile, that her connection with the First Baptist Church of Logport ceased. She would occasionally abandon these civilized and Christian privileges, and disappear from her home, returning after several days of absence with an odor of bark and fish, and a peace-offering to her mistress in the shape of venison or game.

To add to her troubles, she was now fourteen, and, according to the laws of her race, a woman. I do not think the most romantic fancy would have called her pretty. Her complexion defied most of those ambiguous similes through which poets unconsciously apologize for any deviation from the Caucasian standard. It was not wine nor amber colored; if anything, it was smoky. Her face was tattooed with red and white lines on one cheek, as if a fine-toothed comb had been drawn from cheek-bone to jaw, and, but for the good-humor that beamed from her small berry-like eyes and shone in her white teeth, would have

been repulsive. She was short and stout. In her scant drapery and unrestrained freedom she was hardly statuesque, and her more unstudied attitudes were marred by a simian habit of softly scratching her left ankle with the toes of her right foot, in moments of contemplation.

I think I have already shown enough to indicate the incongruity of her existence with even the low standard of civilization that obtained at Logport in the year 1860. It needed but one more fact to prove the far-sighted political sagacity and prophetic ethics of those sincere advocates of extermination, to whose virtues I have done but scant justice in the beginning of this article. This fact was presently furnished by the Princess. After one of her periodical disappearances, — this time unusually prolonged, — she astonished Logport by returning with a half-breed baby of a week old in her arms. That night a meeting of the hard-featured serious matrons of Logport was held at Mrs. Brown's. The immediate banishment of the Princess was demanded. Soft-hearted Mrs. Brown endeavored vainly to get a mitigation or suspension of the sentence. But, as on a former occasion, the Princess took matters into her own hands. A few mornings afterwards, a wicker cradle containing an Indian baby was found hanging on the handle of the door of the First Baptist Church. It was the Parthian arrow of the flying

Princess. From that day Logport knew her no more.

It had been a bright clear day on the upland, so clear that the ramparts of Fort Jackson and the flagstaff were plainly visible twelve miles away from the long curving peninsula that stretched a bared white arm around the peaceful waters of Logport Bay. It had been a clear day upon the sea-shore, albeit the air was filled with the flying spume and shifting sand of a straggling beach whose low dunes were dragged down by the long surges of the Pacific and thrown up again by the tumultuous trade-winds. But the sun had gone down in a bank of fleecy fog that was beginning to roll in upon the beach. Gradually the headland at the entrance of the harbor and the lighthouse disappeared, then the willow fringe that marked the line of Salmon River vanished, and the ocean was gone. A few sails still gleamed on the waters of the bay; but the advancing fog wiped them out one by one, crept across the steel-blue expanse, swallowed up the white mills and single spire of Logport, and, joining with reinforcements from the marshes, moved solemnly upon the hills. Ten minutes more and the landscape was utterly blotted out; simultaneously the wind died away, and a death-like silence stole over sea and shore. The faint clang, high overhead, of un-

seen brent, the nearer call of invisible plover, the lap and wash of undistinguishable waters, and the monotonous roll of the vanished ocean, were the only sounds. As night deepened, the far-off booming of the fog-bell on the headland at intervals stirred the thick air.

Hard by the shore of the bay, and half hidden by a drifting sand-hill, stood a low nondescript structure, to whose composition sea and shore had equally contributed. It was built partly of logs and partly of driftwood and tarred canvas. Joined to one end of the main building — the ordinary log-cabin of the settler — was the half-round pilot-house of some wrecked steamer, while the other gable terminated in half of a broken whale-boat. Nailed against the boat were the dried skins of wild animals, and scattered about lay the flotsam and jetsam of many years' gathering, — bamboo crates, casks, hatches, blocks, oars, boxes, part of a whale's vertebræ, and the blades of sword-fish. Drawn up on the beach of a little cove before the house lay a canoe. As the night thickened and the fog grew more dense, these details grew imperceptible, and only the windows of the pilot-house, lit up by a roaring fire within the hut, gleamed redly through the mist.

By this fire, beneath a ship's lamp that swung from the roof, two figures were seated, a man and a woman. The man, broad-shouldered and heav-

ily bearded, stretched his listless powerful length beyond a broken bamboo chair, with his eyes fixed on the fire. The woman crouched cross-legged upon the broad earthen hearth, with her eyes blinkingly fixed on her companion. They were small, black, round, berry-like eyes, and as the firelight shone upon her smoky face, with its one striped cheek of gorgeous brilliancy, it was plainly the Princess Bob and no other.

Not a word was spoken. They had been sitting thus for more than an hour, and there was about their attitude a suggestion that silence was habitual. Once or twice the man rose and walked up and down the narrow room, or gazed absently from the windows of the pilot-house, but never by look or sign betrayed the slightest consciousness of his companion. At such times the Princess from her nest by the fire followed him with eyes of canine expectancy and wistfulness. But he would as inevitably return to his contemplation of the fire, and the Princess to her blinking watchfulness of his face.

They had sat there silent and undisturbed for many an evening in fair weather and foul. They had spent many a day in sunshine and storm, gathering the unclaimed spoil of sea and shore. They had kept these mute relations, varied only by the incidents of the hunt or meagre household duties, for three years, ever since the man, wan-

dering moodily over the lonely sands, had fallen upon the half-starved woman lying in the little hollow where she had crawled to die. It had seemed as if they would never be disturbed, until now, when the Princess started, and, with the instinct of her race, bent her ear to the ground.

The wind had risen and was rattling the tarred canvas. But in another moment there plainly came from without the hut the sound of voices. Then followed a rap at the door; then another rap; and then, before they could rise to their feet, the door was flung briskly open.

"I beg your pardon," said a pleasant but somewhat decided contralto voice, "but I don't think you heard me knock. Ah, I see you did not. May I come in?"

There was no reply. Had the battered figure-head of the Goddess of Liberty, which lay deeply embedded in the sand on the beach, suddenly appeared at the door demanding admittance, the occupants of the cabin could not have been more speechlessly and hopelessly astonished than at the form which stood in the open doorway.

It was that of a slim, shapely, elegantly dressed young woman. A scarlet-lined silken hood was half thrown back from the shining mass of the black hair that covered her small head; from her pretty shoulders dropped a fur cloak, only re-

strained by a cord and tassel in her small gloved hand. Around her full throat was a double necklace of large white beads, that by some cunning feminine trick relieved with its infantile suggestion the strong decision of her lower face.

"Did you say yes? Ah, thank you. We may come in, Barker." (Here a shadow in a blue army overcoat followed her into the cabin, touched its cap respectfully, and then stood silent and erect against the wall.) "Don't disturb yourself in the least, I beg. What a distressingly unpleasant night! Is this your usual climate?"

Half graciously, half absently overlooking the still embarrassed silence of the group, she went on: "We started from the fort over three hours ago, — three hours ago, was n't it, Barker?" (the erect Barker touched his cap,) — "to go to Captain Emmons's quarters on Indian Island, — I think you call it Indian Island, don't you?" (she was appealing to the awe-stricken Princess,) — "and we got into the fog and lost our way; that is, Barker lost his way," (Barker touched his cap deprecatingly,) "and goodness knows where we did n't wander to until we mistook your light for the lighthouse and pulled up here. No, no, pray keep your seat, do! Really I must insist."

Nothing could exceed the languid grace of the latter part of this speech, — nothing except the easy unconsciousness with which she glided by

the offered chair of her stammering, embarrassed host and stood beside the open hearth.

"Barker will tell you," she continued, warming her feet by the fire, "that I am Miss Portfire, daughter of Major Portfire, commanding the post. Ah, excuse me, child!" (She had accidentally trodden upon the bare yellow toes of the Princess.) "Really, I did not know you were there. I am very near-sighted." (In confirmation of her statement, she put to her eyes a dainty double eyeglass that dangled from her neck.) "It 's a shocking thing to be near-sighted, is n't it?"

If the shamefaced uneasy man to whom this remark was addressed could have found words to utter the thought that even in his confusion struggled uppermost in his mind, he would, looking at the bold, dark eyes that questioned him, have denied the fact. But he only stammered, "Yes." The next moment, however, Miss Portfire had apparently forgotten him and was examining the Princess through her glass.

"And what is your name, child?"

The Princess, beatified by the eyes and eyeglass, showed all her white teeth at once, and softly scratched her leg.

"Bob."

"Bob? What a singular name!"

Miss Portfire's host here hastened to explain the origin of the Princess's title.

"Then *you* are Bob." (Eye-glass.)

"No, my name is Grey, — John Grey." And he actually achieved a bow where awkwardness was rather the air of imperfectly recalling a forgotten habit.

"Grey? — ah, let me see. Yes, certainly. You are Mr. Grey the recluse, the hermit, the philosopher, and all that sort of thing. Why, certainly; Dr. Jones, our surgeon, has told me all about you. Dear me, how interesting a rencontre! Lived all alone here for seven — was it seven years? — yes, I remember now. Existed quite *au naturel*, one might say. How odd! Not that I know anything about that sort of thing, you know. I've lived always among people, and am really quite a stranger, I assure you. But honestly, Mr. — I beg your pardon — Mr. Grey, how do you like it?"

She had quietly taken his chair and thrown her cloak and hood over its back, and was now thoughtfully removing her gloves. Whatever were the arguments, — and they were doubtless many and profound, — whatever the experience, — and it was doubtless hard and satisfying enough, — by which this unfortunate man had justified his life for the last seven years, somehow they suddenly became trivial and terribly ridiculous before this simple but practical question.

"Well, you shall tell me all about it after you

have given me something to eat. We will have time enough; Barker cannot find his way back in this fog to-night. Now don't put yourselves to any trouble on my account. Barker will assist."

Barker came forward. Glad to escape the scrutiny of his guest, the hermit gave a few rapid directions to the Princess in her native tongue, and disappeared in the shed. Left a moment alone, Miss Portfire took a quick, half-audible, feminine inventory of the cabin. "Books, guns, skins, *one* chair, *one* bed, no pictures, and no looking-glass!" She took a book from the swinging shelf and resumed her seat by the fire as the Princess re-entered with fresh fuel. But while kneeling on the hearth the Princess chanced to look up and met Miss Portfire's dark eyes over the edge of her book.

"Bob!"

The Princess showed her teeth.

"Listen. Would you like to have fine clothes, rings, and beads like these, to have your hair nicely combed and put up so? Would you?"

The Princess nodded violently.

"Would you like to live with me and have them? Answer quickly. Don't look round for *him*. Speak for yourself. Would you? Hush; never mind now."

The hermit re-entered, and the Princess, blink-

ing, retreated into the shadow of the whale-boat shed, from which she did not emerge even when the homely repast of cold venison, ship biscuit, and tea was served. Miss Portfire noticed her absence: "You really must not let me interfere with your usual simple ways. Do you know this is exceedingly interesting to me, so pastoral and patriarchal and all that sort of thing. I must insist upon the Princess coming back; really, I must."

But the Princess was not to be found in the shed, and Miss Portfire, who the next minute seemed to have forgotten all about her, took her place in the single chair before an extemporized table. Barker stood behind her, and the hermit leaned against the fireplace. Miss Portfire's appetite did not come up to her protestations. For the first time in seven years it occurred to the hermit that his ordinary victual might be improved. He stammered out something to that effect.

"I have eaten better, and worse," said Miss Portfire, quietly.

"But I thought you — that is, you said — "

"I spent a year in the hospitals, when father was on the Potomac," returned Miss Portfire, composedly. After a pause she continued: "You remember after the second Bull Run — But, dear me! I beg your pardon; of course, you know

nothing about the war and all that sort of thing, and don't care." (She put up her eye-glass and quietly surveyed his broad muscular figure against the chimney.) "Or, perhaps, your prejudices — But then, as a hermit you know you have no politics, of course. Please don't let me bore you."

To have been strictly consistent, the hermit should have exhibited no interest in this topic. Perhaps it was owing to some quality in the narrator, but he was constrained to beg her to continue in such phrases as his unfamiliar lips could command. So that, little by little, Miss Portfire yielded up incident and personal observation of the contest then raging; with the same half-abstracted, half-unconcerned air that seemed habitual to her, she told the stories of privation, of suffering, of endurance, and of sacrifice. With the same assumption of timid deference that concealed her great self-control, she talked of principles and rights. Apparently without enthusiasm and without effort, of which his morbid nature would have been suspicious, she sang the great American Iliad in a way that stirred the depths of her solitary auditor to its massive foundations. Then she stopped and asked quietly, "Where is Bob?"

The hermit started. He would look for her. But Bob, for some reason, was not forthcoming. Search was made within and without the hut, but in vain. For the first time that evening Miss

Portfire showed some anxiety. "Go," she said to Barker, "and find her. She *must* be found; stay, give me your overcoat, I 'll go myself." She threw the overcoat over her shoulders and stepped out into the night. In the thick veil of fog that seemed suddenly to inwrap her, she stood for a moment irresolute, and then walked toward the beach, guided by the low wash of waters on the sand. She had not taken many steps before she stumbled over some dark crouching object. Reaching down her hand she felt the coarse wiry mane of the Princess.

"Bob!"

There was no reply.

"Bob. I 've been looking for you, come."

"Go 'way."

"Nonsense, Bob. I want you to stay with me to-night, come."

"Injin squaw no good for waugee woman. Go 'way."

"Listen, Bob. You are daughter of a chief: so am I. Your father had many warriors: so has mine. It is good that you stay with me. Come."

The Princess chuckled and suffered herself to be lifted up. A few moments later and they re-entered the hut, hand in hand.

With the first red streaks of dawn the next day the erect Barker touched his cap at the door of the hut. Beside him stood the hermit, also just

risen from his blanketed nest in the sand. Forth from the hut, fresh as the morning air, stepped Miss Portfire, leading the Princess by the hand. Hand in hand also they walked to the shore, and when the Princess had been safely bestowed in the stern sheets, Miss Portfire turned and held out her own to her late host.

"I shall take the best of care of her, of course. You will come and see her often. I should ask you to come and see me, but you are a hermit, you know, and all that sort of thing. But if it 's the correct anchorite thing, and can be done, my father will be glad to requite you for this night's hospitality. But don't do anything on my account that interferes with your simple habits. Good by."

She handed him a card, which he took mechanically.

"Good by."

The sail was hoisted, and the boat shoved off. As the fresh morning breeze caught the white canvas it seemed to bow a parting salutation. There was a rosy flush of promise on the water, and as the light craft darted forward toward the ascending sun, it seemed for a moment uplifted in its glory.

Miss Portfire kept her word. If thoughtful care and intelligent kindness could regenerate the

Princess, her future was secure. And it really seemed as if she were for the first time inclined to heed the lessons of civilization and profit by her new condition. An agreeable change was first noticed in her appearance. Her lawless hair was caught in a net, and no longer strayed over her low forehead. Her unstable bust was stayed and upheld by French corsets; her plantigrade shuffle was limited by heeled boots. Her dresses were neat and clean, and she wore a double necklace of glass beads. With this physical improvement there also seemed some moral awakening. She no longer stole nor lied. With the possession of personal property came a respect for that of others. With increased dependence on the word of those about her came a thoughtful consideration of her own. Intellectually she was still feeble, although she grappled sturdily with the simple lessons which Miss Portfire set before her. But her zeal and simple vanity outran her discretion, and she would often sit for hours with an open book before her, which she could not read. She was a favorite with the officers at the fort, from the Major, who shared his daughter's prejudices and often yielded to her powerful self-will, to the subalterns, who liked her none the less that their natural enemies, the frontier volunteers, had declared war against her helpless sisterhood. The only restraint put upon her was the limitation of her lib-

erty to the enclosure of the fort and parade; and only once did she break this parole, and was stopped by the sentry as she stepped into a boat at the landing.

The recluse did not avail himself of Miss Portfire's invitation. But after the departure of the Princess he spent less of his time in the hut, and was more frequently seen in the distant marshes of Eel River and on the upland hills. A feverish restlessness, quite opposed to his usual phlegm, led him into singular freaks strangely inconsistent with his usual habits and reputation. The purser of the occasional steamer which stopped at Logport with the mails reported to have been boarded, just inside the bar, by a strange bearded man, who asked for a newspaper containing the last war telegrams. He tore his red shirt into narrow strips, and spent two days with his needle over the pieces and the tattered remnant of his only white garment; and a few days afterward the fishermen on the bay were surprised to see what, on nearer approach, proved to be a rude imitation of the national flag floating from a spar above the hut.

One evening, as the fog began to drift over the sand-hills, the recluse sat alone in his hut. The fire was dying unheeded on the hearth, for he had been sitting there for a long time, completely absorbed in the blurred pages of an old newspaper.

Presently he arose, and, refolding it, — an operation of great care and delicacy in its tattered condition, — placed it under the blankets of his bed. He resumed his seat by the fire, but soon began drumming with his fingers on the arm of his chair. Eventually this assumed the time and accent of some air. Then he began to whistle softly and hesitatingly, as if trying to recall a forgotten tune. Finally this took shape in a rude resemblance, not unlike that which his flag bore to the national standard, to Yankee Doodle. Suddenly he stopped.

There was an unmistakable rapping at the door. The blood which had at first rushed to his face now forsook it and settled slowly around his heart. He tried to rise, but could not. Then the door was flung open, and a figure with a scarlet-lined hood and fur mantle stood on the threshold. With a mighty effort he took one stride to the door. The next moment he saw the wide mouth and white teeth of the Princess, and was greeted by a kiss that felt like a baptism.

To tear the hood and mantle from her figure in the sudden fury that seized him, and to fiercely demand the reason of this masquerade, was his only return to her greeting. "Why are you here? did you steal these garments?" he again demanded in her guttural language, as he shook her roughly by the arm. The Princess hung her head. "Did

you?" he screamed, as he reached wildly for his rifle.

"I did."

His hold relaxed, and he staggered back against the wall. The Princess began to whimper. Between her sobs, she was trying to explain that the Major and his daughter were going away, and that they wanted to send her to the Reservation; but he cut her short. "Take off those things!" The Princess tremblingly obeyed. He rolled them up, placed them in the canoe she had just left, and then leaped into the frail craft. She would have followed, but with a great oath he threw her from him, and with one stroke of his paddle swept out into the fog, and was gone.

"Jessamy," said the Major, a few days after, as he sat at dinner with his daughter, "I think I can tell you something to match the mysterious disappearance and return of your wardrobe. Your crazy friend, the recluse, has enlisted this morning in the Fourth Artillery. He's a splendid-looking animal, and there's the right stuff for a soldier in him, if I'm not mistaken. He's in earnest too, for he enlists in the regiment ordered back to Washington. Bless me, child, another goblet broken; you'll ruin the mess in glassware, at this rate!"

"Have you heard anything more of the Princess, papa?"

"Nothing, but perhaps it 's as well that she has gone. These cursed settlers are at their old complaints again about what they call 'Indian depredations,' and I have just received orders from head-quarters to keep the settlement clear of all vagabond aborigines. I am afraid, my dear, that a strict construction of the term would include your *protégée*."

The time for the departure of the Fourth Artillery had come. The night before was thick and foggy. At one o'clock, a shot on the ramparts called out the guard and roused the sleeping garrison. The new sentry, Private Grey, had challenged a dusky figure creeping on the glacis, and, receiving no answer, had fired. The guard sent out presently returned, bearing a lifeless figure in their arms. The new sentry's zeal, joined with an ex-frontiersman's aim, was fatal.

They laid the helpless, ragged form before the guard-house door, and then saw for the first time that it was the Princess. Presently she opened her eyes. They fell upon the agonized face of her innocent slayer, but haply without intelligence or reproach.

"Georgy!" she whispered.

"Bob!"

"All 's same now. Me get plenty well soon. Me make no more fuss. Me go to Reservation."

Then she stopped, a tremor ran through her limbs, and she lay still. She had gone to the Reservation. Not that devised by the wisdom of man, but that one set apart from the foundation of the world for the wisest as well as the meanest of His creatures.

THE ILIAD OF SANDY BAR.

BEFORE nine o'clock it was pretty well known all along the river that the two partners of the "Amity Claim" had quarrelled and separated at daybreak. At that time the attention of their nearest neighbor had been attracted by the sounds of altercations and two consecutive pistol-shots. Running out, he had seen, dimly, in the gray mist that rose from the river, the tall form of Scott, one of the partners, descending the hill toward the *cañon;* a moment later, York, the other partner, had appeared from the cabin, and walked in an opposite direction toward the river, passing within a few feet of the curious watcher. Later it was discovered that a serious Chinaman, cutting wood before the cabin, had witnessed part of the quarrel. But John was stolid, indifferent, and reticent. "Me choppee wood, me no fightee," was his serene response to all anxious queries. "But what did they *say*, John?" John did not *sabe*. Colonel Starbottle deftly ran over the various popular epithets which a generous public sentiment might accept as reasonable provocation for an assault. But John did not recognize them. "And this yer's the cat-

tle," said the Colonel, with some severity, "that some thinks oughter be allowed to testify ag'in' a White Man! Git — you heathen!"

Still the quarrel remained inexplicable. That two men, whose amiability and grave tact had earned for them the title of "The Peacemakers," in a community not greatly given to the passive virtues, — that these men, singularly devoted to each other, should suddenly and violently quarrel, might well excite the curiosity of the camp. A few of the more inquisitive visited the late scene of conflict, now deserted by its former occupants. There was no trace of disorder or confusion in the neat cabin. The rude table was arranged as if for breakfast; the pan of yellow biscuit still sat upon that hearth whose dead embers might have typified the evil passions that had raged there but an hour before. But Colonel Starbottle's eye — albeit somewhat bloodshot and rheumy — was more intent on practical details. On examination, a bullet-hole was found in the doorpost, and another, nearly opposite, in the casing of the window. The Colonel called attention to the fact that the one "agreed with" the bore of Scott's revolver, and the other with that of York's derringer. "They must hev stood about yer," said the Colonel, taking position; "not mor'n three feet apart, and — missed!" There was a fine touch of pathos in the falling inflection of the Colonel's voice,

which was not without effect. A delicate perception of wasted opportunity thrilled his auditors.

But the Bar was destined to experience a greater disappointment. The two antagonists had not met since the quarrel, and it was vaguely rumored that, on the occasion of a second meeting, each had determined to kill the other "on sight." There was, consequently, some excitement — and, it is to be feared, no little gratification — when, at ten o'clock, York stepped from the Magnolia Saloon into the one long straggling street of the camp, at the same moment that Scott left the blacksmith's shop at the forks of the road. It was evident, at a glance, that a meeting could only be avoided by the actual retreat of one or the other.

In an instant the doors and windows of the adjacent saloons were filled with faces. Heads unaccountably appeared above the river-banks and from behind bowlders. An empty wagon at the cross-road was suddenly crowded with people, who seemed to have sprung from the earth. There was much running and confusion on the hillside. On the mountain-road, Mr. Jack Hamlin had reined up his horse, and was standing upright on the seat of his buggy. And the two objects of this absorbing attention approached each other.

"York 's got the sun," "Scott 'll line him on that

tree," "He's waitin' to draw his fire," came from the cart; and then it was silent. But above this human breathlessness the river rushed and sang, and the wind rustled the tree-tops with an indifference that seemed obtrusive. Colonel Starbottle felt it, and in a moment of sublime preoccupation, without looking around, waved his cane behind him, warningly to all nature, and said, "Shu!"

The men were now within a few feet of each other. A hen ran across the road before one of them. A feathery seed-vessel, wafted from a wayside tree, fell at the feet of the other. And, unheeding this irony of nature, the two opponents came nearer, erect and rigid, looked in each other's eyes, and — passed!

Colonel Starbottle had to be lifted from the cart. "This yer camp is played out," he said, gloomily, as he affected to be supported into the Magnolia. With what further expression he might have indicated his feelings it was impossible to say, for at that moment Scott joined the group. "Did you speak to me?" he asked of the Colonel, dropping his hand, as if with accidental familiarity, on that gentleman's shoulder. The Colonel, recognizing some occult quality in the touch, and some unknown quantity in the glance of his questioner, contented himself by replying, "No, sir," with dignity. A few rods away, York's conduct was as

characteristic and peculiar. "You had a mighty fine chance; why did n't you plump him?" said Jack Hamlin, as York drew near the buggy. "Because I hate him," was the reply, heard only by Jack. Contrary to popular belief, this reply was not hissed between the lips of the speaker, but was said in an ordinary tone. But Jack Hamlin, who was an observer of mankind, noticed that the speaker's hands were cold, and his lips dry, as he helped him into the buggy, and accepted the seeming paradox with a smile.

When Sandy Bar became convinced that the quarrel between York and Scott could not be settled after the usual local methods, it gave no further concern thereto. But presently it was rumored that the "Amity Claim" was in litigation, and that its possession would be expensively disputed by each of the partners. As it was well known that the claim in question was "worked out" and worthless, and that the partners, whom it had already enriched, had talked of abandoning it but a day or two before the quarrel, this proceeding could only be accounted for as gratuitous spite. Later, two San Francisco lawyers made their appearance in this guileless Arcadia, and were eventually taken into the saloons, and — what was pretty much the same thing — the confidences of the inhabitants. The results of this

unhallowed intimacy were many subpœnas; and, indeed, when the "Amity Claim" came to trial, all of Sandy Bar that was not in compulsory attendance at the county seat came there from curiosity. The gulches and ditches for miles around were deserted. I do not propose to describe that already famous trial. Enough that, in the language of the plaintiff's counsel, "it was one of no ordinary significance, involving the inherent rights of that untiring industry which had developed the Pactolian resources of this golden land"; and, in the homelier phrase of Colonel Starbottle, "A fuss that gentlemen might hev settled in ten minutes over a social glass, ef they meant business; or in ten seconds with a revolver, ef they meant fun." Scott got a verdict, from which York instantly appealed. It was said that he had sworn to spend his last dollar in the struggle.

In this way Sandy Bar began to accept the enmity of the former partners as a lifelong feud, and the fact that they had ever been friends was forgotten. The few who expected to learn from the trial the origin of the quarrel were disappointed. Among the various conjectures, that which ascribed some occult feminine influence as the cause was naturally popular, in a camp given to dubious compliment of the sex. "My word for it, gentlemen," said Colonel Starbottle, who had been known in Sacramento as a Gentleman of the

Old School, "there's some lovely creature at the bottom of this." The gallant Colonel then proceeded to illustrate his theory, by divers sprightly stories, such as Gentlemen of the Old School are in the habit of repeating, but which, from deference to the prejudices of gentlemen of a more recent school, I refrain from transcribing here. But it would appear that even the Colonel's theory was fallacious. The only woman who personally might have exercised any influence over the partners was the pretty daughter of "old man Folinsbee," of Poverty Flat, at whose hospitable house — which exhibited some comforts and refinements rare in that crude civilization — both York and Scott were frequent visitors. Yet into this charming retreat York strode one evening, a month after the quarrel, and, beholding Scott sitting there, turned to the fair hostess with the abrupt query, "Do you love this man?" The young woman thus addressed returned that answer — at once spirited and evasive — which would occur to most of my fair readers in such an exigency. Without another word, York left the house. "Miss Jo" heaved the least possible sigh as the door closed on York's curls and square shoulders, and then, like a good girl, turned to her insulted guest. "But would you believe it, dear?" she afterward related to an intimate friend, "the other creature, after glowering at me for a moment, got upon its

hind legs, took its hat, and left, too; and that's the last I 've seen of either."

The same hard disregard of all other interests or feelings in the gratification of their blind rancor characterized all their actions. When York purchased the land below Scott's new claim, and obliged the latter, at a great expense, to make a long détour to carry a "tail-race" around it, Scott retaliated by building a dam that overflowed York's claim on the river. It was Scott, who, in conjunction with Colonel Starbottle, first organized that active opposition to the Chinamen, which resulted in the driving off of York's Mongolian laborers; it was York who built the wagon-road and established the express which rendered Scott's mules and pack-trains obsolete; it was Scott who called into life the Vigilance Committee which expatriated York's friend, Jack Hamlin; it was York who created the "Sandy Bar Herald," which characterized the act as "a lawless outrage," and Scott as a "Border Ruffian"; it was Scott, at the head of twenty masked men, who, one moonlight night, threw the offending "forms" into the yellow river, and scattered the types in the dusty road. These proceedings were received in the distant and more civilized outlying towns as vague indications of progress and vitality. I have before me a copy of the "Poverty Flat Pioneer," for the week ending August 12, 1856, in which the editor,

under the head of "County Improvements," says: "The new Presbyterian Church on C Street, at Sandy Bar, is completed. It stands upon the lot formerly occupied by the Magnolia Saloon, which was so mysteriously burnt last month. The temple, which now rises like a Phœnix from the ashes of the Magnolia, is virtually the free gift of H. J. York, Esq., of Sandy Bar, who purchased the lot and donated the lumber. Other buildings are going up in the vicinity, but the most noticeable is the 'Sunny South Saloon,' erected by Captain Mat. Scott, nearly opposite the church. Captain Scott has spared no expense in the furnishing of this saloon, which promises to be one of the most agreeable places of resort in old Tuolumne. He has recently imported two new, first-class billiard-tables, with cork cushions. Our old friend, 'Mountain Jimmy,' will dispense liquors at the bar. We refer our readers to the advertisement in another column. Visitors to Sandy Bar cannot do better than give 'Jimmy' a call." Among the local items occurred the following: "H. J. York, Esq., of Sandy Bar, has offered a reward of $100 for the detection of the parties who hauled away the steps of the new Presbyterian Church, C Street, Sandy Bar, during divine service on Sabbath evening last. Captain Scott adds another hundred for the capture of the miscreants who broke the magnificent plate-glass windows of the

new saloon on the following evening. There is some talk of reorganizing the old Vigilance Committee at Sandy Bar."

When, for many months of cloudless weather, the hard, unwinking sun of Sandy Bar had regularly gone down on the unpacified wrath of these men, there was some talk of mediation. In particular, the pastor of the church to which I have just referred — a sincere, fearless, but perhaps not fully enlightened man — seized gladly upon the occasion of York's liberality to attempt to reunite the former partners. He preached an earnest sermon on the abstract sinfulness of discord and rancor. But the excellent sermons of the Rev. Mr. Daws were directed to an ideal congregation that did not exist at Sandy Bar, — a congregation of beings of unmixed vices and virtues, of single impulses, and perfectly logical motives, of preternatural simplicity, of childlike faith, and grown-up responsibilities. As, unfortunately, the people who actually attended Mr. Daws's church were mainly very human, somewhat artful, more self-excusing than self-accusing, rather good-natured, and decidedly weak, they quietly shed that portion of the sermon which referred to themselves, and, accepting York and Scott — who were both in defiant attendance — as curious examples of those ideal beings above referred to, felt a certain satisfaction — which, I fear, was not altogether Christian-like

— in their "raking-down." If Mr. Daws expected York and Scott to shake hands after the sermon, he was disappointed. But he did not relax his purpose. With that quiet fearlessness and determination which had won for him the respect of men who were too apt to regard piety as synonymous with effeminacy, he attacked Scott in his own house. What he said has not been recorded, but it is to be feared that it was part of his sermon. When he had concluded, Scott looked at him, not unkindly, over the glasses of his bar, and said, less irreverently than the words might convey, "Young man, I rather like your style; but when you know York and me as well as you do God Almighty, it 'll be time to talk."

And so the feud progressed; and so, as in more illustrious examples, the private and personal enmity of two representative men led gradually to the evolution of some crude, half-expressed principle or belief. It was not long before it was made evident that those beliefs were identical with certain broad principles laid down by the founders of the American Constitution, as expounded by the statesmanlike A.; or were the fatal quicksands, on which the ship of state might be wrecked, warningly pointed out by the eloquent B. The practical result of all which was the nomination of York and Scott to represent the opposite factions of Sandy Bar in legislative councils.

For some weeks past, the voters of Sandy Bar and the adjacent camps had been called upon, in large type, to "RALLY!" In vain the great pines at the cross-roads — whose trunks were compelled to bear this and other legends — moaned and protested from their windy watch-towers. But one day, with fife and drum, and flaming transparency, a procession filed into the triangular grove at the head of the gulch. The meeting was called to order by Colonel Starbottle, who, having once enjoyed legislative functions, and being vaguely known as a "war-horse," was considered to be a valuable partisan of York. He concluded an appeal for his friend, with an enunciation of principles, interspersed with one or two anecdotes so gratuitously coarse that the very pines might have been moved to pelt him with their cast-off cones, as he stood there. But he created a laugh, on which his candidate rode into popular notice; and when York rose to speak, he was greeted with cheers. But, to the general astonishment, the new speaker at once launched into bitter denunciation of his rival. He not only dwelt upon Scott's deeds and example, as known to Sandy Bar, but spoke of facts connected with his previous career, hitherto unknown to his auditors. To great precision of epithet and directness of statement, the speaker added the fascination of revelation and exposure. The crowd cheered, yelled, and were delighted,

but when this astounding philippic was concluded, there was a unanimous call for "Scott!" Colonel Starbottle would have resisted this manifest impropriety, but in vain. Partly from a crude sense of justice, partly from a meaner craving for excitement, the assemblage was inflexible; and Scott was dragged, pushed, and pulled upon the platform.

As his frowsy head and unkempt beard appeared above the railing, it was evident that he was drunk. But it was also evident, before he opened his lips, that the orator of Sandy Bar — the one man who could touch their vagabond sympathies (perhaps because he was not above appealing to them) — stood before them. A consciousness of this power lent a certain dignity to his figure, and I am not sure but that his very physical condition impressed them as a kind of regal unbending and large condescension. Howbeit, when this unexpected Hector arose from the ditch, York's myrmidons trembled.

"There 's naught, gentlemen," said Scott, leaning forward on the railing, — "there 's naught as that man hez said as is n't true. I was run outer Cairo; I did belong to the Regulators; I did desert from the army; I did leave a wife in Kansas. But thar 's one thing he did n't charge me with, and, maybe, he 's forgotten. For three years, gentlemen, I was that man's pardner! — " Whether

he intended to say more, I cannot tell; a burst of applause artistically rounded and enforced the climax, and virtually elected the speaker. That fall he went to Sacramento, York went abroad; and for the first time in many years, distance and a new atmosphere isolated the old antagonists.

With little of change in the green wood, gray rock, and yellow river, but with much shifting of human landmarks, and new faces in its habitations, three years passed over Sandy Bar. The two men, once so identified with its character, seemed to have been quite forgotten. "You will never return to Sandy Bar," said Miss Folinsbee, the "Lily of Poverty Flat," on meeting York in Paris, "for Sandy Bar is no more. They call it Riverside now; and the new town is built higher up on the river-bank. By the by, 'Jo' says that Scott has won his suit about the 'Amity Claim,' and that he lives in the old cabin, and is drunk half his time. O, I beg your pardon," added the lively lady, as a flush crossed York's sallow cheek; "but, bless me, I really thought that old grudge was made up. I'm sure it ought to be."

It was three months after this conversation, and a pleasant summer evening, that the Poverty Flat coach drew up before the veranda of the Union Hotel at Sandy Bar. Among its passengers was one, apparently a stranger, in the local distinction

of well-fitting clothes and closely shaven face, who demanded a private room and retired early to rest. But before sunrise next morning he arose, and, drawing some clothes from his carpet-bag, proceeded to array himself in a pair of white duck trousers, a white duck overshirt, and straw hat. When his toilet was completed, he tied a red bandanna handkerchief in a loop and threw it loosely over his shoulders. The transformation was complete. As he crept softly down the stairs and stepped into the road, no one would have detected in him the elegant stranger of the previous night, and but few have recognized the face and figure of Henry York of Sandy Bar.

In the uncertain light of that early hour, and in the change that had come over the settlement, he had to pause for a moment to recall where he stood. The Sandy Bar of his recollection lay below him, nearer the river; the buildings around him were of later date and newer fashion. As he strode toward the river, he noticed here a schoolhouse and there a church. A little farther on, "The Sunny South" came in view, transformed into a restaurant, its gilding faded and its paint rubbed off. He now knew where he was; and, running briskly down a declivity, crossed a ditch, and stood upon the lower boundary of the Amity Claim.

The gray mist was rising slowly from the river,

clinging to the tree-tops and drifting up the mountain-side, until it was caught among those rocky altars, and held a sacrifice to the ascending sun. At his feet the earth, cruelly gashed and scarred by his forgotten engines, had, since the old days, put on a show of greenness here and there, and now smiled forgivingly up at him, as if things were not so bad after all. A few birds were bathing in the ditch with a pleasant suggestion of its being a new and special provision of nature, and a hare ran into an inverted sluice-box, as he approached, as if it were put there for that purpose.

He had not yet dared to look in a certain direction. But the sun was now high enough to paint the little eminence on which the cabin stood. In spite of his self-control, his heart beat faster as he raised his eyes toward it. Its window and door were closed, no smoke came from its *adobe* chimney, but it was else unchanged. When within a few yards of it, he picked up a broken shovel, and, shouldering it with a smile, strode toward the door and knocked. There was no sound from within The smile died upon his lips as he nervously pushed the door open.

A figure started up angrily and came toward him, — a figure whose bloodshot eyes suddenly fixed into a vacant stare, whose arms were at first outstretched and then thrown up in warning ges-

ticulation, — a figure that suddenly gasped, choked, and then fell forward in a fit.

But before he touched the ground, York had him out into the open air and sunshine. In the struggle, both fell and rolled over on the ground. But the next moment York was sitting up, holding the convulsed frame of his former partner on his knee, and wiping the foam from his inarticulate lips. Gradually the tremor became less frequent, and then ceased; and the strong man lay unconscious in his arms.

For some moments York held him quietly thus, looking in his face. Afar, the stroke of a woodman's axe — a mere phantom of sound — was all that broke the stillness. High up the mountain, a wheeling hawk hung breathlessly above them. And then came voices, and two men joined them.

"A fight?" No, a fit; and would they help him bring the sick man to the hotel?

And there, for a week, the stricken partner lay, unconscious of aught but the visions wrought by disease and fear. On the eighth day, at sunrise, he rallied, and, opening his eyes, looked upon York, and pressed his hand; then he spoke: —

"And it's you. I thought it was only whiskey."

York replied by taking both of his hands, boyishly working them backward and forward, as his elbow rested on the bed, with a pleasant smile.

"And you 've been abroad. How did you like Paris?"

"So, so. How did *you* like Sacramento?"

"Bully."

And that was all they could think to say. Presently Scott opened his eyes again.

"I 'm mighty weak."

"You 'll get better soon."

"Not much."

A long silence followed, in which they could hear the sounds of wood-chopping, and that Sandy Bar was already astir for the coming day. Then Scott slowly and with difficulty turned his face to York, and said, —

"I might hev killed you once."

"I wish you had."

They pressed each other's hands again, but Scott's grasp was evidently failing. He seemed to summon his energies for a special effort.

"Old man!"

"Old chap."

"Closer!"

York bent his head toward the slowly fading face.

"Do ye mind that morning?"

"Yes."

A gleam of fun slid into the corner of Scott's blue eye, as he whispered, —

"Old man, thar *was* too much saleratus in that bread."

It is said that these were his last words. For when the sun, which had so often gone down upon the idle wrath of these foolish men, looked again upon them reunited, it saw the hand of Scott fall cold and irresponsive from the yearning clasp of his former partner, and it knew that the feud of Sandy Bar was at an end.

MR. THOMPSON'S PRODIGAL.

WE all knew that Mr. Thompson was looking for his son, and a pretty bad one at that. That he was coming to California for this sole object was no secret to his fellow-passengers; and the physical peculiarities, as well as the moral weaknesses, of the missing prodigal were made equally plain to us through the frank volubility of the parent. "You was speaking of a young man which was hung at Red Dog for sluice-robbing," said Mr. Thompson to a steerage passenger, one day; "be you aware of the color of his eyes?" "Black," responded the passenger. "Ah," said Mr. Thompson, referring to some mental memoranda, "Char-les's eyes was blue." He then walked away. Perhaps it was from this unsympathetic mode of inquiry, perhaps it was from that Western predilection to take a humorous view of any principle or sentiment persistently brought before them, that Mr. Thompson's quest was the subject of some satire among the passengers. A gratuitous advertisement of the missing Charles, addressed to "Jailers and Guardians," circulated privately among them; everybody remembered to have met

Charles under distressing circumstances. Yet it is but due to my countrymen to state that when it was known that Thompson had embarked some wealth in this visionary project, but little of this satire found its way to his ears, and nothing was uttered in his hearing that might bring a pang to a father's heart, or imperil a possible pecuniary advantage of the satirist. Indeed, Mr. Bracy Tibbets's jocular proposition to form a joint-stock company to "prospect" for the missing youth received at one time quite serious entertainment.

Perhaps to superficial criticism Mr. Thompson's nature was not picturesque nor lovable. His history, as imparted at dinner, one day, by himself, was practical even in its singularity. After a hard and wilful youth and maturity, — in which he had buried a broken-spirited wife, and driven his son to sea, — he suddenly experienced religion. "I got it in New Orleans in '59," said Mr. Thompson, with the general suggestion of referring to an epidemic. "Enter ye the narrer gate. Parse me the beans." Perhaps this practical quality upheld him in his apparently hopeless search. He had no clew to the whereabouts of his runaway son; indeed, scarcely a proof of his present existence. From his indifferent recollection of the boy of twelve, he now expected to identify the man of twenty-five.

It would seem that he was successful. How he

succeeded was one of the few things he did not tell. There are, I believe, two versions of the story. One, that Mr. Thompson, visiting a hospital, discovered his son by reason of a peculiar hymn, chanted by the sufferer, in a delirious dream of his boyhood. This version, giving as it did wide range to the finer feelings of the heart, was quite popular; and as told by the Rev. Mr. Gushington, on his return from his California tour, never failed to satisfy an audience. The other was less simple, and, as I shall adopt it here, deserves more elaboration.

It was after Mr. Thompson had given up searching for his son among the living, and had taken to the examination of cemeteries, and a careful inspection of the "cold *hic jacets* of the dead." At this time he was a frequent visitor of "Lone Mountain," — a dreary hill-top, bleak enough in its original isolation, and bleaker for the white-faced marbles by which San Francisco anchored her departed citizens, and kept them down in a shifting sand that refused to cover them, and against a fierce and persistent wind that strove to blow them utterly away. Against this wind the old man opposed a will quite as persistent, — a grizzled, hard face, and a tall, crape-bound hat drawn tightly over his eyes, — and so spent days in reading the mortuary inscriptions audibly to himself. The frequency of Scriptural quotation

pleased him, and he was fond of corroborating them by a pocket Bible. "That 's from Psalms," he said, one day, to an adjacent grave-digger. The man made no reply. Not at all rebuffed, Mr. Thompson at once slid down into the open grave, with a more practical inquiry, "Did you ever, in your profession, come across Char-les Thompson?" "Thompson be d—d!" said the grave-digger, with great directness. "Which, if he had n't religion, I think he is," responded the old man, as he clambered out of the grave.

It was, perhaps, on this occasion that Mr. Thompson stayed later than usual. As he turned his face toward the city, lights were beginning to twinkle ahead, and a fierce wind, made visible by fog, drove him forward, or, lying in wait, charged him angrily from the corners of deserted suburban streets. It was on one of these corners that something else, quite as indistinct and malevolent, leaped upon him with an oath, a presented pistol, and a demand for money. But it was met by a will of iron and a grip of steel. The assailant and assailed rolled together on the ground. But the next moment the old man was erect; one hand grasping the captured pistol, the other clutching at arm's length the throat of a figure, surly, youthful, and savage.

"Young man," said Mr. Thompson, setting his thin lips together, "what might be your name?"

"Thompson!"

The old man's hand slid from the throat to the arm of his prisoner, without relaxing its firmness.

"Char-les Thompson, come with me," he said, presently, and marched his captive to the hotel. What took place there has not transpired, but it was known the next morning that Mr. Thompson had found his son.

It is proper to add to the above improbable story, that there was nothing in the young man's appearance or manners to justify it. Grave, reticent, and handsome, devoted to his newly found parent, he assumed the emoluments and responsibilities of his new condition with a certain serious ease that more nearly approached that which San Francisco society lacked, and — rejected. Some chose to despise this quality as a tendency to "psalm-singing"; others saw in it the inherited qualities of the parent, and were ready to prophesy for the son the same hard old age. But all agreed that it was not inconsistent with the habits of money-getting, for which father and son were respected.

And yet, the old man did not seem to be happy. Perhaps it was that the consummation of his wishes left him without a practical mission; perhaps — and it is the more probable — he had little love for the son he had regained. The obedience

he exacted was freely given, the reform he had set his heart upon was complete; and yet, somehow, it did not seem to please him. In reclaiming his son, he had fulfilled all the requirements that his religious duty required of him, and yet the act seemed to lack sanctification. In this perplexity, he read again the parable of the Prodigal Son, — which he had long ago adopted for his guidance, — and found that he had omitted the final feast of reconciliation. This seemed to offer the proper quality of ceremoniousness in the sacrament between himself and his son; and so, a year after the appearance of Charles, he set about giving him a party. "Invite everybody, Char-les," he said, dryly; "everybody who knows that I brought you out of the wine-husks of iniquity, and the company of harlots; and bid them eat, drink, and be merry."

Perhaps the old man had another reason, not yet clearly analyzed. The fine house he had built on the sand-hills sometimes seemed lonely and bare. He often found himself trying to reconstruct, from the grave features of Charles, the little boy whom he but dimly remembered in the past, and of whom lately he had been thinking a great deal. He believed this to be a sign of impending old age and childishness; but coming, one day, in his formal drawing-room, upon a child of one of the servants, who had strayed therein, he would

have taken him in his arms, but the child fled from before his grizzled face. So that it seemed eminently proper to invite a number of people to his house, and, from the array of San Francisco maidenhood, to select a daughter-in-law. And then there would be a child — a boy, whom he could "rare up" from the beginning, and — love — as he did not love Charles.

We were all at the party. The Smiths, Joneses, Browns, and Robinsons also came, in that fine flow of animal spirits, unchecked by any respect for the entertainer, which most of us are apt to find so fascinating. The proceedings would have been somewhat riotous, but for the social position of the actors. In fact, Mr. Bracy Tibbets, having naturally a fine appreciation of a humorous situation, but further impelled by the bright eyes of the Jones girls, conducted himself so remarkably as to attract the serious regard of Mr. Charles Thompson, who approached him, saying quietly: "You look ill, Mr. Tibbets; let me conduct you to your carriage. Resist, you hound, and I 'll throw you through that window. This way, please; the room is close and distressing." It is hardly necessary to say that but a part of this speech was audible to the company, and that the rest was not divulged by Mr. Tibbets, who afterward regretted the sudden illness which kept him from witnessing a certain amusing incident, which the fastest Miss Jones

characterized as the "richest part of the blow-out," and which I hasten to record.

It was at supper. It was evident that Mr. Thompson had overlooked much lawlessness in the conduct of the younger people, in his abstract contemplation of some impending event. When the cloth was removed, he rose to his feet, and grimly tapped upon the table. A titter, that broke out among the Jones girls, became epidemic on one side of the board. Charles Thompson, from the foot of the table, looked up in tender perplexity. "He 's going to sing a Doxology," "He 's going to pray," "Silence for a speech," ran round the room.

"It 's one year to-day, Christian brothers and sisters," said Mr. Thompson, with grim deliberation, — "one year to-day since my son came home from eating of wine-husks and spending of his substance on harlots." (The tittering suddenly ceased.) "Look at him now. Char-les Thompson, stand up." (Charles Thompson stood up.) "One year ago to-day, — and look at him now."

He was certainly a handsome prodigal, standing there in his cheerful evening-dress, — a repentant prodigal, with sad, obedient eyes turned upon the harsh and unsympathetic glance of his father. The youngest Miss Smith, from the pure depths of her foolish little heart, moved unconsciously toward him.

"It 's fifteen years ago since he left my house," said Mr. Thompson, "a rovier and a prodigal. I was myself a man of sin, O Christian friends, — a man of wrath and bitterness" ("Amen," from the eldest Miss Smith), — "but praise be God, I've fled the wrath to come. It 's five years ago since I got the peace that passeth understanding. Have you got it, friends?" (A general sub-chorus of "No, no," from the girls, and, "Pass the word for it," from Midshipman Coxe, of the U. S. sloop Wethersfield.) "Knock, and it shall be opened to you.

"And when I found the error of my ways, and the preciousness of grace," continued Mr. Thompson, "I came to give it to my son. By sea and land I sought him far, and fainted not. I did not wait for him to come to me, which the same I might have done, and justified myself by the Book of books, but I sought him out among his husks, and —" (the rest of the sentence was lost in the rustling withdrawal of the ladies). "Works, Christian friends, is my motto. By their works shall ye know them, and there is mine."

The particular and accepted work to which Mr. Thompson was alluding had turned quite pale, and was looking fixedly toward an open door leading to the veranda, lately filled by gaping servants, and now the scene of some vague tumult. As the noise continued, a man, shabbily dressed, and evi-

dently in liquor, broke through the opposing guardians, and staggered into the room. The transition from the fog and darkness without to the glare and heat within evidently dazzled and stupefied him. He removed his battered hat, and passed it once or twice before his eyes, as he steadied himself, but unsuccessfully, by the back of a chair. Suddenly, his wandering glance fell upon the pale face of Charles Thompson; and with a gleam of childlike recognition, and a weak, falsetto laugh, he darted forward, caught at the table, upset the glasses, and literally fell upon the prodigal's breast.

"Sha'ly! yo' d—d ol' scoun'rel, hoo rar ye!"

"Hush!—sit down!—hush!" said Charles Thompson, hurriedly endeavoring to extricate himself from the embrace of his unexpected guest.

"Look at 'm!" continued the stranger, unheeding the admonition, but suddenly holding the unfortunate Charles at arm's length, in loving and undisguised admiration of his festive appearance. "Look at 'm! Ain't he nasty? Sha'ls, I 'm prow of yer!"

"Leave the house!" said Mr. Thompson, rising, with a dangerous look in his cold, gray eye. "Char-les, how dare you?"

"Simmer down, ole man! Sha'ls, who 's th' ol' bloat? Eh?"

"Hush, man; here, take this!" With nervous

hands, Charles Thompson filled a glass with liquor. "Drink it and go — until to-morrow — any time, but — leave us! — go now!" But even then, ere the miserable wretch could drink, the old man, pale with passion, was upon him. Half carrying him in his powerful arms, half dragging him through the circling crowd of frightened guests, he had reached the door, swung open by the waiting servants, when Charles Thompson started from a seeming stupor, crying, —

"Stop!"

The old man stopped. Through the open door the fog and wind drove chilly. "What does this mean?" he asked, turning a baleful face on Charles.

"Nothing — but stop — for God's sake. Wait till to-morrow, but not to-night. Do not — I implore you — do this thing."

There was something in the tone of the young man's voice, something, perhaps, in the contact of the struggling wretch he held in his powerful arms; but a dim, indefinite fear took possession of the old man's heart. "Who," he whispered, hoarsely, "is this man?"

Charles did not answer.

"Stand back, there, all of you," thundered Mr. Thompson, to the crowding guests around him. "Char-les — come here! I command you — I — I — I — beg you — tell me *who* is this man?"

Only two persons heard the answer that came faintly from the lips of Charles Thompson, —

"YOUR SON."

When day broke over the bleak sand-hills, the guests had departed from Mr. Thompson's banquet-halls. The lights still burned dimly and coldly in the deserted rooms, — deserted by all but three figures, that huddled together in the chill drawing-room, as if for warmth. One lay in drunken slumber on a couch; at his feet sat he who had been known as Charles Thompson; and beside them, haggard and shrunken to half his size, bowed the figure of Mr. Thompson, his gray eye fixed, his elbows upon his knees, and his hands clasped over his ears, as if to shut out the sad, entreating voice that seemed to fill the room.

"God knows I did not set about to wilfully deceive. The name I gave that night was the first that came into my thought, — the name of one whom I thought dead, — the dissolute companion of my shame. And when you questioned further, I used the knowledge that I gained from him to touch your heart to set me free; only, I swear, for that! But when you told me who you were, and I first saw the opening of another life before me — then — then — O, sir, if I was hungry, homeless, and reckless, when I would have robbed you of your gold, I was heart-sick, helpless, and

desperate, when I would have robbed you of your love!"

The old man stirred not. From his luxurious couch the newly found prodigal snored peacefully.

"I had no father I could claim. I never knew a home but this. I was tempted. I have been happy, — very happy."

He rose and stood before the old man.

"Do not fear that I shall come between your son and his inheritance. To-day I leave this place, never to return. The world is large, sir, and, thanks to your kindness, I now see the way by which an honest livelihood is gained. Good by. You will not take my hand? Well, well. Good by."

He turned to go. But when he had reached the door he suddenly came back, and, raising with both hands the grizzled head, he kissed it once and twice.

"Char-les."

There was no reply.

"Char-les!"

The old man rose with a frightened air, and tottered feebly to the door. It was open. There came to him the awakened tumult of a great city, in which the prodigal's footsteps were lost forever.

THE ROMANCE OF MADROÑO HOLLOW.

THE latch on the garden gate of the Folinsbee Ranch clicked twice. The gate itself was so much in shadow that lovely night, that "old man Folinsbee," sitting on his porch, could distinguish nothing but a tall white hat and beside it a few fluttering ribbons, under the pines that marked the entrance. Whether because of this fact, or that he considered a sufficient time had elapsed since the clicking of the latch for more positive disclosure, I do not know; but after a few moments' hesitation he quietly laid aside his pipe and walked slowly down the winding path toward the gate. At the Ceanothus hedge he stopped and listened.

There was not much to hear. The hat was saying to the ribbons that it was a fine night, and remarking generally upon the clear outline of the Sierras against the blue-black sky. The ribbons, it so appeared, had admired this all the way home, and asked the hat if it had ever seen anything half so lovely as the moonlight on the summit. The hat never had; it recalled some lovely nights in the South in Alabama ("in the South in Ahla-

bahm" was the way the old man heard it), but then there were other things that made this night seem so pleasant. The ribbons could not possibly conceive what the hat could be thinking about. At this point there was a pause, of which Mr. Folinsbee availed himself to walk very grimly and craunchingly down the gravel-walk toward the gate. Then the hat was lifted, and disappeared in the shadow, and Mr. Folinsbee confronted only the half-foolish, half-mischievous, but wholly pretty face of his daughter.

It was afterward known to Madroño Hollow that sharp words passed between "Miss Jo" and the old man, and that the latter coupled the names of one Culpepper Starbottle and his uncle, Colonel Starbottle, with certain uncomplimentary epithets, and that Miss Jo retaliated sharply. "Her father's blood before her father's face boiled up and proved her truly of his race," quoted the blacksmith, who leaned toward the noble verse of Byron. "She saw the old man's bluff and raised him," was the directer comment of the college-bred Masters.

Meanwhile the subject of these animadversions proceeded slowly along the road to a point where the Folinsbee mansion came in view, — a long, narrow, white building, unpretentious, yet superior to its neighbors, and bearing some evidences of taste and refinement in the vines that clambered over its porch, in its French windows, and the

white muslin curtains that kept out the fierce California sun by day, and were now touched with silver in the gracious moonlight. Culpepper leaned against the low fence, and gazed long and earnestly at the building. Then the moonlight vanished ghost-like from one of the windows, a material glow took its place, and a girlish figure, holding a candle, drew the white curtains together. To Culpepper it was a vestal virgin standing before a hallowed shrine; to the prosaic observer I fear it was only a fair-haired young woman, whose wicked black eyes still shone with unfilial warmth. Howbeit, when the figure had disappeared he stepped out briskly into the moonlight of the high-road. Here he took off his distinguishing hat to wipe his forehead, and the moon shone full upon his face.

It was not an unprepossessing one, albeit a trifle too thin and lank and bilious to be altogether pleasant. The cheek-bones were prominent, and the black eyes sunken in their orbits. Straight black hair fell slantwise off a high but narrow forehead, and swept part of a hollow cheek. A long black mustache followed the perpendicular curves of his mouth. It was on the whole a serious, even Quixotic face, but at times it was relieved by a rare smile of such tender and even pathetic sweetness, that Miss Jo is reported to have said that, if it would only last through the ceremony, she would have married its possessor on the spot.

"I once told him so," added that shameless young woman; "but the man instantly fell into a settled melancholy, and has n't smiled since."

A half-mile below the Folinsbee Ranch the white road dipped and was crossed by a trail that ran through Madroño Hollow. Perhaps because it was a near cut-off to the settlement, perhaps from some less practical reason, Culpepper took this trail, and in a few moments stood among the rarely beautiful trees that gave their name to the valley. Even in that uncertain light the weird beauty of these harlequin masqueraders was apparent; their red trunks — a blush in the moonlight, a deep blood-stain in the shadow — stood out against the silvery green foliage. It was as if Nature in some gracious moment had here caught and crystallized the gypsy memories of the transplanted Spaniard, to cheer him in his lonely exile.

As Culpepper entered the grove he heard loud voices. As he turned toward a clump of trees, a figure so *bizarre* and characteristic that it might have been a resident Daphne — a figure overdressed in crimson silk and lace, with bare brown arms and shoulders, and a wreath of honeysuckle — stepped out of the shadow. It was followed by a man. Culpepper started. To come to the point briefly, he recognized in the man the features of his respected uncle, Colonel Starbottle; in the female, a lady who may be briefly described as one

possessing absolutely no claim to an introduction to the polite reader. To hurry over equally unpleasant details, both were evidently under the influence of liquor.

From the excited conversation that ensued, Culpepper gathered that some insult had been put upon the lady at a public ball which she had attended that evening; that the Colonel, her escort, had failed to resent it with the sanguinary completeness that she desired. I regret that, even in a liberal age, I may not record the exact and even picturesque language in which this was conveyed to her hearers. Enough that at the close of a fiery peroration, with feminine inconsistency she flew at the gallant Colonel, and would have visited her delayed vengeance upon his luckless head, but for the prompt interference of Culpepper. Thwarted in this, she threw herself upon the ground, and then into unpicturesque hysterics. There was a fine moral lesson, not only in this grotesque performance of a sex which cannot afford to be grotesque, but in the ludicrous concern with which it inspired the two men. Culpepper, to whom woman was more or less angelic, was pained and sympathetic; the Colonel, to whom she was more or less improper, was exceedingly terrified and embarrassed. Howbeit the storm was soon over, and after Mistress Dolores had returned a little dagger to its sheath (her garter), she quietly took herself

out of Madroño Hollow, and happily out of these pages forever. The two men, left to themselves, conversed in low tones. Dawn stole upon them before they separated: the Colonel quite sobered and in full possession of his usual jaunty self-assertion; Culpepper with a baleful glow in his hollow cheek, and in his dark eyes a rising fire.

The next morning the general ear of Madroño Hollow was filled with rumors of the Colonel's mishap. It was asserted that he had been invited to withdraw his female companion from the floor of the Assembly Ball at the Independence Hotel, and that, failing to do this, both were expelled. It is to be regretted that in 1854 public opinion was divided in regard to the propriety of this step, and that there was some discussion as to the comparative virtue of the ladies who were not expelled; but it was generally conceded that the real *casus belli* was political. "Is this a dashed Puritan meeting?" had asked the Colonel, savagely. "It 's no Pike County shindig," had responded the floor-manager, cheerfully. "You 're a Yank!" had screamed the Colonel, profanely qualifying the noun. "Get! you border ruffian," was the reply. Such at least was the substance of the reports. As, at that sincere epoch, expressions like the above were usually followed by prompt action, a fracas was confidently looked for.

Nothing, however, occurred. Colonel Starbottle made his appearance next day upon the streets with somewhat of his usual pomposity, a little restrained by the presence of his nephew, who accompanied him, and who, as a universal favorite, also exercised some restraint upon the curious and impertinent. But Culpepper's face wore a look of anxiety quite at variance with his usual grave repose. "The Don don't seem to take the old man's set-back kindly," observed the sympathizing blacksmith. "P'r'aps he was sweet on Dolores himself," suggested the sceptical expressman.

It was a bright morning, a week after this occurrence, that Miss Jo Folinsbee stepped from her garden into the road. This time the latch did not click as she cautiously closed the gate behind her. After a moment's irresolution, which would have been awkward but that it was charmingly employed, after the manner of her sex, in adjusting a bow under a dimpled but rather prominent chin, and in pulling down the fingers of a neatly fitting glove, she tripped toward the settlement. Small wonder that a passing teamster drove his six mules into the wayside ditch and imperilled his load, to keep the dust from her spotless garments; small wonder that the "Lightning Express" withheld its speed and flash to let her pass, and that the expressman, who had never been known to exchange more than rapid monosyllables with his

fellow-man, gazed after her with breathless admiration. For she was certainly attractive. In a country where the ornamental sex followed the example of youthful Nature, and were prone to overdress and glaring efflorescence, Miss Jo's simple and tasteful raiment added much to the physical charm of, if it did not actually suggest a sentiment to, her presence. It is said that Euchre-deck Billy, working in the gulch at the crossing, never saw Miss Folinsbee pass but that he always remarked apologetically to his partner, that "he believed he *must* write a letter home." Even Bill Masters, who saw her in Paris presented to the favorable criticism of that most fastidious man, the late Emperor, said that she was stunning, but a big discount on what she was at Madroño Hollow.

It was still early morning, but the sun, with California extravagance, had already begun to beat hotly on the little chip hat and blue ribbons, and Miss Jo was obliged to seek the shade of a by-path. Here she received the timid advances of a vagabond yellow dog graciously, until, emboldened by his success, he insisted upon accompanying her, and, becoming slobberingly demonstrative, threatened her spotless skirt with his dusty paws, when she drove him from her with some slight acerbity, and a stone which haply fell within fifty feet of its destined mark. Having thus proved her

ability to defend herself, with characteristic inconsistency she took a small panic, and, gathering her white skirts in one hand, and holding the brim of her hat over her eyes with the other, she ran swiftly at least a hundred yards before she stopped. Then she began picking some ferns and a few wild-flowers still spared to the withered fields, and then a sudden distrust of her small ankles seized her, and she inspected them narrowly for those burrs and bugs and snakes which are supposed to lie in wait for helpless womanhood. Then she plucked some golden heads of wild oats, and with a sudden inspiration placed them in her black hair, and then came quite unconsciously upon the trail leading to Madroño Hollow.

Here she hesitated. Before her ran the little trail, vanishing at last into the bosky depths below. The sun was very hot. She must be very far from home. Why should she not rest awhile under the shade of a madroño ?

She answered these questions by going there at once. After thoroughly exploring the grove, and satisfying herself that it contained no other living human creature, she sat down under one of the largest trees, with a satisfactory little sigh. Miss Jo loved the madroño. It was a cleanly tree ; no dust ever lay upon its varnished leaves ; its immaculate shade never was known to harbor grub or insect.

She looked up at the rosy arms interlocked and arched above her head. She looked down at the delicate ferns and cryptogams at her feet. Something glittered at the root of the tree. She picked it up; it was a bracelet. She examined it carefully for cipher or inscription; there was none. She could not resist a natural desire to clasp it on her arm, and to survey it from that advantageous view-point. This absorbed her attention for some moments; and when she looked up again she beheld at a little distance Culpepper Starbottle.

He was standing where he had halted, with instinctive delicacy, on first discovering her. Indeed, he had even deliberated whether he ought not to go away without disturbing her. But some fascination held him to the spot. Wonderful power of humanity! Far beyond jutted an outlying spur of the Sierra, vast, compact, and silent. Scarcely a hundred yards away, a league-long chasm dropped its sheer walls of granite a thousand feet. On every side rose up the serried ranks of pine-trees, in whose close-set files centuries of storm and change had wrought no breach. Yet all this seemed to Culpepper to have been planned by an all-wise Providence as the natural background to the figure of a pretty girl in a yellow dress.

Although Miss Jo had confidently expected to meet Culpepper somewhere in her ramble, now

that he came upon her suddenly, she felt disappointed and embarrassed. His manner, too, was more than usually grave and serious, and more than ever seemed to jar upon that audacious levity which was this giddy girl's power and security in a society where all feeling was dangerous. As he approached her she rose to her feet, but almost before she knew it he had taken her hand and drawn her to a seat beside him. This was not what Miss Jo had expected, but nothing is so difficult to predicate as the exact preliminaries of a declaration of love.

What did Culpepper say? Nothing, I fear, that will add anything to the wisdom of the reader; nothing, I fear, that Miss Jo had not heard substantially from other lips before. But there was a certain conviction, fire-speed, and fury in the manner that was deliciously novel to the young lady. It was certainly something to be courted in the nineteenth century with all the passion and extravagance of the sixteenth; it was something to hear, amid the slang of a frontier society, the language of knight-errantry poured into her ear by this lantern-jawed, dark-browed descendant of the Cavaliers.

I do not know that there was anything more in it. The facts, however, go to show that at a certain point Miss Jo dropped her glove, and that in recovering it Culpepper possessed himself first of

her hand and then her lips. When they stood up to go Culpepper had his arm around her waist, and her black hair, with its sheaf of golden oats, rested against the breast pocket of his coat. But even then I do not think her fancy was entirely captive. She took a certain satisfaction in this demonstration of Culpepper's splendid height, and mentally compared it with a former flame, one Lieutenant McMirk, an active, but under-sized Hector, who subsequently fell a victim to the incautiously composed and monotonous beverages of a frontier garrison. Nor was she so much preoccupied but that her quick eyes, even while absorbing Culpepper's glances, were yet able to detect, at a distance, the figure of a man approaching. In an instant she slipped out of Culpepper's arm, and, whipping her hands behind her, said, "There 's that horrid man!"

Culpepper looked up and beheld his respected uncle panting and blowing over the hill. His brow contracted as he turned to Miss Jo: "You don't like my uncle!"

"I hate him!" Miss Jo was recovering her ready tongue.

Culpepper blushed. He would have liked to enter upon some details of the Colonel's pedigree and exploits, but there was not time. He only smiled sadly. The smile melted Miss Jo. She held out her hand quickly, and said with even

more than her usual effrontery, "Don't let that man get you into any trouble. Take care of yourself, dear, and don't let anything happen to you."

Miss Jo intended this speech to be pathetic; the tenure of life among her lovers had hitherto been very uncertain. Culpepper turned toward her, but she had already vanished in the thicket.

The Colonel came up panting. "I 've looked all over town for you, and be dashed to you, sir. Who was that with you?"

"A lady." (Culpepper never lied, but he was discreet.)

"D—m 'em all! Look yar, Culp, I 've spotted the man who gave the order to put me off the floor" ("flo" was what the Colonel said) "the other night!"

"Who was it?" asked Culpepper, listlessly.

"Jack Folinsbee."

"Who?"

"Why, the son of that dashed nigger-worshipping psalm-singing Puritan Yankee. What 's the matter, now? Look yar, Culp, you ain't goin' back on your blood, ar' ye? You ain't goin' back on your word? Ye ain't going down at the feet of this trash, like a whipped hound?"

Culpepper was silent. He was very white. Presently he looked up and said quietly, "No."

Culpepper Starbottle had challenged Jack Fol-

insbee, and the challenge was accepted. The cause alleged was the expelling of Culpepper's uncle from the floor of the Assembly Ball by the order of Folinsbee. This much Madroño Hollow knew and could swear to; but there were other strange rumors afloat, of which the blacksmith was an able expounder. "You see, gentlemen," he said to the crowd gathered around his anvil, "I ain't got no theory of this affair, I only give a few facts as have come to my knowledge. Culpepper and Jack meets quite accidental like in Bob's saloon. Jack goes up to Culpepper and says, 'A word with you.' Culpepper bows and steps aside in this way, Jack standing about *here*." (The blacksmith demonstrates the position of the parties with two old horseshoes on the anvil.) "Jack pulls a bracelet from his pocket and says, 'Do you know that bracelet?' Culpepper says, 'I do not,' quite cool-like and easy. Jack says, 'You gave it to my sister.' Culpepper says, still cool as you please, 'I did not.' Jack says, 'You lie, G—d d—mn you,' and draws his derringer. Culpepper jumps forward about here" (reference is made to the diagram) "and Jack fires. Nobody hit. It 's a mighty cur'o's thing, gentlemen," continued the blacksmith, dropping suddenly into the abstract, and leaning meditatively on his anvil, — "it 's a mighty cur'o's thing that nobody gets hit so often. You and me empties our revolvers sociably at each other over a

little game, and the room full and nobody gets hit! That 's what gets me."

"Never mind, Thompson," chimed in Bill Masters, "there 's another and a better world where we shall know all that and — become better shots. Go on with your story."

"Well, some grabs Culpepper and some grabs Jack, and so separates them. Then Jack tells 'em as how he had seen his sister wear a bracelet which he knew was one that had been given to Dolores by Colonel Starbottle. That Miss Jo would n't say where she got it, but owned up to having seen Culpepper that day. Then the most cur'o's thing of it yet, what does Culpepper do but rise up and takes all back that he said, and allows that he *did* give her the bracelet. Now my opinion, gentlemen, is that he lied; it ain't like that man to give a gal that he respects anything off of that piece, Dolores. But it 's all the same now, and there 's but one thing to be done."

The way this one thing was done belongs to the record of Madroño Hollow. The morning was bright and clear; the air was slightly chill, but that was from the mist which arose along the banks of the river. As early as six o'clock the designated ground — a little opening in the madroño grove — was occupied by Culpepper Starbottle, Colonel Starbottle, his second, and the surgeon. The Colonel was exalted and excited, albeit in a

rather imposing, dignified way, and pointed out to the surgeon the excellence of the ground, which at that hour was wholly shaded from the sun, whose steady stare is more or less discomposing to your duellist. The surgeon threw himself on the grass and smoked his cigar. Culpepper, quiet and thoughtful, leaned against a tree and gazed up the river. There was a strange suggestion of a picnic about the group, which was heightened when the Colonel drew a bottle from his coat-tails, and, taking a preliminary draught, offered it to the others. "Cocktails, sir," he explained with dignified precision. "A gentleman, sir, should never go out without 'em. Keeps off the morning chill. I remember going out in '53 with Hank Boompirater. Good ged, sir, the man had to put on his overcoat, and was shot in it. Fact."

But the noise of wheels drowned the Colonel's reminiscences, and a rapidly driven buggy, containing Jack Folinsbee, Calhoun Bungstarter, his second, and Bill Masters, drew up on the ground. Jack Folinsbee leaped out gayly. "I had the jolliest work to get away without the governor's hearing," he began, addressing the group before him with the greatest volubility. Calhoun Bungstarter touched his arm, and the young man blushed. It was his first duel.

"If you are ready, gentlemen," said Mr. Bungstarter, "we had better proceed to business. I

believe it is understood that no apology will be offered or accepted. We may as well settle preliminaries at once, or I fear we shall be interrupted. There is a rumor in town that the Vigilance Committee are seeking our friends the Starbottles, and I believe, as their fellow-countryman, I have the honor to be included in their warrant."

At this probability of interruption, that gravity which had hitherto been wanting fell upon the group. The preliminaries were soon arranged and the principals placed in position. Then there was a silence.

To a spectator from the hill, impressed with the picnic suggestion, what might have been the popping of two champagne corks broke the stillness.

Culpepper had fired in the air. Colonel Starbottle uttered a low curse. Jack Folinsbee sulkily demanded another shot.

Again the parties stood opposed to each other. Again the word was given, and what seemed to be the simultaneous report of both pistols rose upon the air. But after an interval of a few seconds all were surprised to see Culpepper slowly raise his unexploded weapon and fire it harmlessly above his head. Then, throwing the pistol upon the ground, he walked to a tree and leaned silently against it.

Jack Folinsbee flew into a paroxysm of fury. Colonel Starbottle raved and swore. Mr. Bung-

starter was properly shocked at their conduct. "Really, gentlemen, if Mr. Culpepper Starbottle declines another shot, I do not see how we can proceed."

But the Colonel's blood was up, and Jack Folinsbee was equally implacable. A hurried consultation ensued, which ended by Colonel Starbottle taking his nephew's place as principal, Bill Masters acting as second, *vice* Mr. Bungstarter, who declined all further connection with the affair.

Two distinct reports rang through the Hollow. Jack Folinsbee dropped his smoking pistol, took a step forward, and then dropped heavily upon his face.

In a moment the surgeon was at his side. The confusion was heightened by the trampling of hoofs, and the voice of the blacksmith bidding them flee for their lives before the coming storm. A moment more and the ground was cleared, and the surgeon, looking up, beheld only the white face of Culpepper bending over him.

"Can you save him?"

"I cannot say. Hold up his head a moment, while I run to the buggy."

Culpepper passed his arm tenderly around the neck of the insensible man. Presently the surgeon returned with some stimulants.

"There, that will do, Mr. Starbottle, thank you. Now my advice is to get away from here while

you can. I 'll look after Folinsbee. Do you hear ? "

Culpepper's arm was still round the neck of his late foe, but his head had drooped and fallen on the wounded man's shoulder. The surgeon looked down, and, catching sight of his face, stooped and lifted him gently in his arms. He opened his coat and waistcoat. There was blood upon his shirt, and a bullet-hole in his breast. He had been shot unto death at the first fire.

THE POET OF SIERRA FLAT.

AS the enterprising editor of the "Sierra Flat Record" stood at his case setting type for his next week's paper, he could not help hearing the woodpeckers who were busy on the roof above his head. It occurred to him that possibly the birds had not yet learned to recognize in the rude structure any improvement on nature, and this idea pleased him so much that he incorporated it in the editorial article which he was then doubly composing. For the editor was also printer of the "Record"; and although that remarkable journal was reputed to exert a power felt through all Calaveras and a greater part of Tuolumne County, strict economy was one of the conditions of its beneficent existence.

Thus preoccupied, he was startled by the sudden irruption of a small roll of manuscript, which was thrown through the open door and fell at his feet. He walked quickly to the threshold and looked down the tangled trail which led to the high-road. But there was nothing to suggest the presence of his mysterious contributor. A hare limped slowly away, a green-and-gold lizard paused upon a pine

stump, the woodpeckers ceased their work. So complete had been his sylvan seclusion, that he found it difficult to connect any human agency with the act; rather the hare seemed to have an inexpressibly guilty look, the woodpeckers to maintain a significant silence, and the lizard to be conscience-stricken into stone.

An examination of the manuscript, however, corrected this injustice to defenceless nature. It was evidently of human origin, — being verse, and of exceeding bad quality. The editor laid it aside. As he did so he thought he saw a face at the window. Sallying out in some indignation, he penetrated the surrounding thicket in every direction, but his search was as fruitless as before. The poet, if it were he, was gone.

A few days after this the editorial seclusion was invaded by voices of alternate expostulation and entreaty. Stepping to the door, the editor was amazed at beholding Mr. Morgan McCorkle, a well-known citizen of Angelo, and a subscriber to the "Record," in the act of urging, partly by force and partly by argument, an awkward young man toward the building. When he had finally effected his object, and, as it were, safely landed his prize in a chair, Mr. McCorkle took off his hat, carefully wiped the narrow isthmus of forehead which divided his black brows from his stubby hair, and, with an explanatory wave of his hand toward his

reluctant companion, said, "A borned poet, and the cussedest fool you ever seed!"

Accepting the editor's smile as a recognition of the introduction, Mr. McCorkle panted and went on: "Did n't want to come! 'Mister Editor don't want to see me, Morg,' sez he. 'Milt,' sez I, 'he do; a borned poet like you and a gifted genius like he oughter come together sociable!' And I fetched him. Ah, will yer?" The born poet had, after exhibiting signs of great distress, started to run. But Mr. McCorkle was down upon him instantly, seizing him by his long linen coat, and settled him back in his chair. "'T ain't no use stampeding. Yer ye are and yer ye stays. For yer a borned poet, — ef ye are as shy as a jackass rabbit. Look at 'im now!"

He certainly was not an attractive picture. There was hardly a notable feature in his weak face, except his eyes, which were moist and shy and not unlike the animal to which Mr. McCorkle had compared him. It was the face that the editor had seen at the window.

"Knowed him for fower year, — since he war a boy," continued Mr. McCorkle in a loud whisper. "Allers the same, bless you! Can jerk a rhyme as easy as turnin' jack. Never had any eddication; lived out in Missooray all his life. But he 's chock full o' poetry. On'y this mornin' sez I to him, — he camps along o' me, — 'Milt!' sez I, 'are break-

fast ready?' and he up and answers back quite peart and chipper, 'The breakfast it is ready, and the birds is singing free, and it 's risin' in the dawnin' light is happiness to me!' When a man," said Mr. McCorkle, dropping his voice with deep solemnity, "gets off things like them, without any call to do it, and handlin' flapjacks over a cookstove at the same time, — that man 's a borned poet."

There was an awkward pause. Mr. McCorkle beamed patronizingly on his *protégé*. The born poet looked as if he were meditating another flight, — not a metaphorical one. The editor asked if he could do anything for them.

"In course you can," responded Mr. McCorkle, "that 's jest it. Milt, where 's that poetry?"

The editor's countenance fell as the poet produced from his pocket a roll of manuscript. He, however, took it mechanically and glanced over it. It was evidently a duplicate of the former mysterious contribution.

The editor then spoke briefly but earnestly. I regret that I cannot recall his exact words, but it appeared that never before, in the history of the "Record," had the pressure been so great upon its columns. Matters of paramount importance, deeply affecting the material progress of Sierra, questions touching the absolute integrity of Calaveras and Tuolumne as social communities, were even

now waiting expression. Weeks, nay, months, must elapse before that pressure would be removed, and the "Record" could grapple with any but the sternest of topics. Again, the editor had noticed with pain the absolute decline of poetry in the foot-hills of the Sierras. Even the works of Byron and Moore attracted no attention in Dutch Flat, and a prejudice seemed to exist against Tennyson in Grass Valley. But the editor was not without hope for the future. In the course of four or five years, when the country was settled, —

"What would be the cost to print this yer?" interrupted Mr. McCorkle, quietly.

"About fifty dollars, as an advertisement," responded the editor with cheerful alacrity.

Mr. McCorkle placed the sum in the editor's hand. "Yer see thet 's what I sez to Milt, 'Milt,' sez I, 'pay as you go, for you are a borned poet. Hevin no call to write, but doin' it free and spontaneous like, in course you pays. Thet 's why Mr. Editor never printed your poetry.'"

"What name shall I put to it?" asked the editor.

"Milton."

It was the first word that the born poet had spoken during the interview, and his voice was so very sweet and musical that the editor looked at him curiously, and wondered if he had a sister.

"Milton; is that all?"

"Thet 's his furst name," exclaimed Mr. McCorkle.

The editor here suggested that as there had been another poet of that name —

"Milt might be took for him! Thet 's bad," reflected Mr. McCorkle with simple gravity. "Well, put down his hull name, — Milton Chubbuck."

The editor made a note of the fact. "I 'll set it up now," he said. This was also a hint that the interview was ended. The poet and patron, arm in arm, drew towards the door. "In next week's paper," said the editor, smilingly, in answer to the childlike look of inquiry in the eyes of the poet, and in another moment they were gone.

The editor was as good as his word. He straightway betook himself to his case, and, unrolling the manuscript, began his task. The woodpeckers on the roof recommenced theirs, and in a few moments the former sylvan seclusion was restored. There was no sound in the barren, barn-like room but the birds above, and below the click of the composing-rule as the editor marshalled the types into lines in his stick, and arrayed them in solid column on the galley. Whatever might have been his opinion of the copy before him, there was no indication of it in his face, which wore the stolid indifference of his craft. Perhaps this was unfortunate, for as the day wore on and the level rays of the sun began

to pierce the adjacent thicket, they sought out and discovered an anxious ambushed figure drawn up beside the editor's window, — a figure that had sat there motionless for hours. Within, the editor worked on as steadily and impassively as Fate. And without, the born poet of Sierra Flat sat and watched him as waiting its decree.

The effect of the poem on Sierra Flat was remarkable and unprecedented. The absolute vileness of its doggerel, the gratuitous imbecility of its thought, and above all the crowning audacity of the fact that it was the work of a citizen and published in the county paper, brought it instantly into popularity. For many months Calaveras had languished for a sensation; since the last vigilance committee nothing had transpired to dispel the listless *ennui* begotten of stagnant business and growing civilization. In more prosperous moments the office of the "Record" would have been simply gutted and the editor deported; at present the paper was in such demand that the edition was speedily exhausted. In brief, the poem of Mr. Milton Chubbuck came like a special providence to Sierra Flat. It was read by camp-fires, in lonely cabins, in flaring bar-rooms and noisy saloons, and declaimed from the boxes of stage-coaches. It was sung in Poker Flat with the addition of a local chorus, and danced as an unhal-

lowed rhythmic dance by the Pyrrhic phalanx of One Horse Gulch, known as "The Festive Stags of Calaveras." Some unhappy ambiguities of expression gave rise to many new readings, notes, and commentaries, which, I regret to state, were more often marked by ingenuity than delicacy of thought or expression.

Never before did poet acquire such sudden local reputation. From the seclusion of McCorkle's cabin and the obscurity of culinary labors, he was haled forth into the glowing sunshine of Fame. The name of Chubbuck was written in letters of chalk on unpainted walls, and carved with a pick on the sides of tunnels. A drink known variously as "The Chubbuck Tranquillizer," or "The Chubbuck Exalter," was dispensed at the bars. For some weeks a rude design for a Chubbuck statue, made up of illustrations from circus and melodeon posters, representing the genius of Calaveras in brief skirts on a flying steed in the act of crowning the poet Chubbuck, was visible at Keeler's Ferry. The poet himself was overborne with invitations to drink and extravagant congratulations. The meeting between Colonel Starbottle of Siskyion and Chubbuck, as previously arranged by our "Boston," late of Roaring Camp, is said to have been indescribably affecting. The Colonel embraced him unsteadily. "I could not return to my constituents at Siskyion, sir, if this hand,

which has grasped that of the gifted Prentice and the lamented Poe, should not have been honored by the touch of the godlike Chubbuck. Gentlemen, American literature is looking up. Thank you, I will take sugar in mine." It was "Boston" who indited letters of congratulations from H. W. Longfellow, Tennyson, and Browning, to Mr. Chubbuck, deposited them in the Sierra Flat post-office, and obligingly consented to dictate the replies.

The simple faith and unaffected delight with which these manifestations were received by the poet and his patron might have touched the hearts of these grim masters of irony, but for the sudden and equal development in both of the variety of weak natures. Mr. McCorkle basked in the popularity of his *protégé*, and became alternately supercilious or patronizing toward the dwellers of Sierra Flat; while the poet, with hair carefully oiled and curled, and bedecked with cheap jewelry and flaunting neck-handkerchief, paraded himself before the single hotel. As may be imagined, this new disclosure of weakness afforded intense satisfaction to Sierra Flat, gave another lease of popularity to the poet, and suggested another idea to the facetious "Boston."

At that time a young lady popularly and professionally known as the "California Pet" was performing to enthusiastic audiences in the interior. Her specialty lay in the personation of youthful

masculine character; as a *gamin* of the street she was irresistible, as a negro-dancer she carried the honest miner's heart by storm. A saucy, pretty brunette, she had preserved a wonderful moral reputation even under the Jove-like advances of showers of gold that greeted her appearance on the stage at Sierra Flat. A prominent and delighted member of that audience was Milton Chubbuck. He attended every night. Every day he lingered at the door of the Union Hotel for a glimpse of the "California Pet." It was not long before he received a note from her, — in "Boston's" most popular and approved female hand, — acknowledging his admiration. It was not long before "Boston" was called upon to indite a suitable reply. At last, in furtherance of his facetious design, it became necessary for "Boston" to call upon the young actress herself and secure her personal participation. To her he unfolded a plan, the successful carrying out of which he felt would secure his fame to posterity as a practical humorist. The "California Pet's" black eyes sparkled approvingly and mischievously. She only stipulated that she should see the man first, — a concession to her feminine weakness which years of dancing Juba and wearing trousers and boots had not wholly eradicated from her wilful breast. By all means, it should be done. And the interview was arranged for the next week.

It must not be supposed that during this interval of popularity Mr. Chubbuck had been unmindful of his poetic qualities. A certain portion of each day he was absent from town, — "a communin' with natur'," as Mr. McCorkle expressed it, — and actually wandering in the mountain trails, or lying on his back under the trees, or gathering fragrant herbs and the bright-colored berries of the Marzanita. These and his company he generally brought to the editor's office, late in the afternoon, often to that enterprising journalist's infinite weariness. Quiet and uncommunicative, he would sit there patiently watching him at his work until the hour for closing the office arrived, when he would as quietly depart. There was something so humble and unobtrusive in these visits, that the editor could not find it in his heart to deny them, and accepting them, like the woodpeckers, as a part of his sylvan surroundings, often forgot even his presence. Once or twice, moved by some beauty of expression in the moist, shy eyes, he felt like seriously admonishing his visitor of his idle folly; but his glance falling upon the oiled hair and the gorgeous necktie, he invariably thought better of it. The case was evidently hopeless.

The interview between Mr. Chubbuck and the "California Pet" took place in a private room of the Union Hotel; propriety being respected by

the presence of that arch-humorist, "Boston." To this gentleman we are indebted for the only true account of the meeting. However reticent Mr. Chubbuck might have been in the presence of his own sex, toward the fairer portion of humanity he was, like most poets, exceedingly voluble. Accustomed as the "California Pet" had been to excessive compliment, she was fairly embarrassed by the extravagant praises of her visitor. Her personation of boy characters, her dancing of the "champion jig," were particularly dwelt upon with fervid but unmistakable admiration. At last, recovering her audacity and emboldened by the presence of "Boston," the "California Pet" electrified her hearers by demanding, half jestingly, half viciously, if it were as a boy or a girl that she was the subject of his flattering admiration.

"That knocked him out o' time," said the delighted "Boston," in his subsequent account of the interview. "But do you believe the d—d fool actually asked her to take him with her; wanted to engage in the company."

The plan, as briefly unfolded by "Boston," was to prevail upon Mr. Chubbuck to make his appearance in costume (already designed and prepared by the inventor) before a Sierra Flat audience, and recite an original poem at the Hall immediately on the conclusion of the "California Pet's" performance. At a given signal the audience were to

rise and deliver a volley of unsavory articles (previously provided by the originator of the scheme); then a select few were to rush on the stage, seize the poet, and, after marching him in triumphal procession through town, were to deposit him beyond its uttermost limits, with strict injunctions never to enter it again. To the first part of the plan the poet was committed, for the latter portion it was easy enough to find participants.

The eventful night came, and with it an audience that packed the long narrow room with one dense mass of human beings. The "California Pet" never had been so joyous, so reckless, so fascinating and audacious before. But the applause was tame and weak compared to the ironical outburst that greeted the second rising of the curtain and the entrance of the born poet of Sierra Flat. Then there was a hush of expectancy, and the poet stepped to the foot-lights and stood with his manuscript in his hand.

His face was deadly pale. Either there was some suggestion of his fate in the faces of his audience, or some mysterious instinct told him of his danger. He attempted to speak, but faltered, tottered, and staggered to the wings.

Fearful of losing his prey, "Boston" gave the signal and leaped upon the stage. But at the same moment a light figure darted from behind the scenes, and delivering a kick that sent the dis-

comfited humorist back among the musicians, cut a pigeon-wing, executed a double-shuffle, and then advancing to the foot-lights with that inimitable look, that audacious swagger and utter *abandon* which had so thrilled and fascinated them a moment before, uttered the characteristic speech: "Wot are you goin' to hit a man fur, when he 's down, s-a-a-y?"

The look, the drawl, the action, the readiness, and above all the downright courage of the little woman, had its effect. A roar of sympathetic applause followed the act. "Cut and run while you can," she whispered hurriedly over her one shoulder, without altering the other's attitude of pert and saucy defiance toward the audience. But even as she spoke the poet tottered and sank fainting upon the stage. Then she threw a despairing whisper behind the scenes, "Ring down the curtain."

There was a slight movement of opposition in the audience, but among them rose the burly shoulders of Yuba Bill, the tall, erect figure of Henry York of Sandy Bar, and the colorless, determined face of John Oakhurst. The curtain came down.

Behind it knelt the "California Pet" beside the prostrate poet. "Bring me some water. Run for a doctor. Stop!! CLEAR OUT, ALL OF YOU!"

She had unloosed the gaudy cravat and opened

the shirt-collar of the insensible figure before her. Then she burst into an hysterical laugh.

"Manuela!"

Her tiring-woman, a Mexican half-breed, came toward her.

"Help me with him to my dressing-room, quick; then stand outside and wait. If any one questions you, tell them he 's gone. Do you hear? HE 's gone."

The old woman did as she was bade. In a few moments the audience had departed. Before morning so also had the "California Pet," Manuela, and — the poet of Sierra Flat.

But, alas! with them also had departed the fair fame of the "California Pet." Only a few, and these it is to be feared of not the best moral character themselves, still had faith in the stainless honor of their favorite actress. "It was a mighty foolish thing to do, but it 'll all come out right yet." On the other hand, a majority gave her full credit and approbation for her undoubted pluck and gallantry, but deplored that she should have thrown it away upon a worthless object. To elect for a lover the despised and ridiculed vagrant of Sierra Flat, who had not even the manliness to stand up in his own defence, was not only evidence of inherent moral depravity, but was an insult to the community. Colonel Starbottle saw in it only another instance of the extreme frailty of the sex;

he had known similar cases; and remembered distinctly, sir, how a well-known Philadelphia heiress, one of the finest women that ever rode in her kerridge, that, gad, sir! had thrown over a Southern member of Congress to consort with a d—d nigger. The Colonel had also noticed a singular look in the dog's eye which he did not entirely fancy. He would not say anything against the lady, sir, but he had noticed — And here haply the Colonel became so mysterious and darkly confidential as to be unintelligible and inaudible to the bystanders.

A few days after the disappearance of Mr. Chubbuck a singular report reached Sierra Flat, and it was noticed that "Boston," who since the failure of his elaborate joke had been even more depressed in spirits than is habitual with great humorists, suddenly found that his presence was required in San Francisco. But as yet nothing but the vaguest surmises were afloat, and nothing definite was known.

It was a pleasant afternoon when the editor of the "Sierra Flat Record" looked up from his case and beheld the figure of Mr. Morgan McCorkle standing in the doorway. There was a distressed look on the face of that worthy gentleman that at once enlisted the editor's sympathizing attention. He held an open letter in his hand, as he advanced toward the middle of the room.

"As a man as has allers borne a fair reputation," began Mr. McCorkle slowly, "I should like, if so be as I could, Mister Editor, to make a correction in the columns of your valooable paper."

Mr. Editor begged him to proceed.

"Ye may not disremember that about a month ago I fetched here what so be as we 'll call a young man whose name might be as it were Milton — Milton Chubbuck."

Mr. Editor remembered perfectly.

"Thet same party I 'd knowed better nor fower year, two on 'em campin' out together. Not that I 'd known him all the time, fur he war shy and strange at spells and had odd ways that I took war nat'ral to a borned poet. Ye may remember that I said he was a borned poet?"

The editor distinctly did.

"I picked this same party up in St. Jo., takin' a fancy to his face, and kinder calklating he 'd runn'd away from home, — for I 'm a married man, Mr. Editor, and hev children of my own, — and thinkin' belike he was a borned poet."

"Well?" said the editor.

"And as I said before, I should like now to make a correction in the columns of your valooable paper."

"What correction?" asked the editor.

"I said, ef you remember my words, as how he was a borned poet."

"Yes."

"From statements in this yer letter it seems as how I war wrong."

"Well?"

"She war a woman."

THE CHRISTMAS GIFT THAT CAME TO RUPERT.

A STORY FOR LITTLE SOLDIERS.

IT was the Christmas season in California, — a season of falling rain and springing grasses. There were intervals when, through driving clouds and flying scud, the sun visited the haggard hills with a miracle, and death and resurrection were as one, and out of the very throes of decay a joyous life struggled outward and upward. Even the storms that swept down the dead leaves nurtured the tender buds that took their places. There were no episodes of snowy silence ; over the quickening fields the farmer's ploughshare hard followed the furrows left by the latest rains. Perhaps it was for this reason that the Christmas evergreens which decorated the drawing-room took upon themselves a foreign aspect, and offered a weird contrast to the roses, seen dimly through the windows, as the southwest wind beat their soft faces against the panes.

"Now," said the Doctor, drawing his chair closer to the fire, and looking mildly but firmly at

the semicircle of flaxen heads around him, "I want it distinctly understood before I begin my story, that I am not to be interrupted by any ridiculous questions. At the first one I shall stop. At the second, I shall feel it my duty to administer a dose of castor-oil, all around. The boy that moves his legs or arms will be understood to invite amputation. I have brought my instruments with me, and never allow pleasure to interfere with my business. Do you promise?"

"Yes, sir," said six small voices, simultaneously. The volley was, however, followed by half a dozen dropping questions.

"Silence! Bob, put your feet down, and stop rattling that sword. Flora shall sit by my side, like a little lady, and be an example to the rest. Fung Tang shall stay, too, if he likes. Now, turn down the gas a little; there, that will do, — just enough to make the fire look brighter, and to show off the Christmas candles. Silence, everybody! The boy who cracks an almond, or breathes too loud over his raisins, will be put out of the room."

There was a profound silence. Bob laid his sword tenderly aside, and nursed his leg thoughtfully. Flora, after coquettishly adjusting the pocket of her little apron, put her arm upon the Doctor's shoulder, and permitted herself to be drawn beside him. Fung Tang, the little heathen page, who was permitted, on this rare occasion, to

share the Christian revels in the drawing-room, surveyed the group with a smile that was at once sweet and philosophical. The light ticking of a French clock on the mantel, supported by a young shepherdess of bronze complexion and great symmetry of limb, was the only sound that disturbed the Christmas-like peace of the apartment, — a peace which held the odors of evergreens, new toys, cedar-boxes, glue, and varnish in an harmonious combination that passed all understanding.

"About four years ago at this time," began the Doctor, "I attended a course of lectures in a certain city. One of the professors, who was a sociable, kindly man, — though somewhat practical and hard-headed, — invited me to his house on Christmas night. I was very glad to go, as I was anxious to see one of his sons, who, though only twelve years old, was said to be very clever. I dare not tell you how many Latin verses this little fellow could recite, or how many English ones he had composed. In the first place, you 'd want me to repeat them; secondly, I'm not a judge of poetry, Latin or English. But there were judges who said they were wonderful for a boy, and everybody predicted a splendid future for him. Everybody but his father. He shook his head doubtingly, whenever it was mentioned, for, as I have told you, he was a practical, matter-of-fact man.

"There was a pleasant party at the Professor's that night. All the children of the neighborhood were there, and among them the Professor's clever son, Rupert, as they called him, — a thin little chap, about as tall as Bobby there, and as fair and delicate as Flora by my side. His health was feeble, his father said; he seldom ran about and played with other boys, preferring to stay at home and brood over his books, and compose what he called his verses.

"Well, we had a Christmas-tree just like this, and we had been laughing and talking, calling off the names of the children who had presents on the tree, and everybody was very happy and joyous, when one of the children suddenly uttered a cry of mingled surprise and hilarity, and said, 'Here 's something for Rupert; and what do you think it is?'

"We all guessed. 'A desk'; 'A copy of Milton'; 'A gold pen'; 'A rhyming dictionary.' 'No? what then?'

"'A drum!'

"'A what?' asked everybody.

"'A drum! with Rupert's name on it.'

"Sure enough there it was. A good-sized, bright, new, brass-bound drum, with a slip of paper on it, with the inscription, 'For Rupert.'

"Of course we all laughed, and thought it a good joke. 'You see you 're to make a noise in

the world, Rupert!' said one. 'Here's parchment for the poet,' said another. 'Rupert's last work in sheepskin covers,' said a third. 'Give us a classical tune, Rupert,' said a fourth; and so on. But Rupert seemed too mortified to speak; he changed color, bit his lips, and finally burst into a passionate fit of crying, and left the room. Then those who had joked him felt ashamed, and everybody began to ask who had put the drum there. But no one knew, or if they did, the unexpected sympathy awakened for the sensitive boy kept them silent. Even the servants were called up and questioned, but no one could give any idea where it came from. And, what was still more singular, everybody declared that up to the moment it was produced, no one had seen it hanging on the tree. What do I think? Well, I have my own opinion. But no questions! Enough for you to know that Rupert did not come down stairs again that night, and the party soon after broke up.

"I had almost forgotten those things, for the war of the Rebellion broke out the next spring, and I was appointed surgeon in one of the new regiments, and was on my way to the seat of war. But I had to pass through the city where the Professor lived, and there I met him. My first question was about Rupert. The Professor shook his head sadly. 'He's not so well,' he said; 'he has

been declining since last Christmas, when you saw him. A very strange case,' he added, giving it a long Latin name, — 'a very singular case. But go and see him yourself,' he urged; 'it may distract his mind and do him good.'

"I went accordingly to the Professor's house, and found Rupert lying on a sofa, propped up with pillows. Around him were scattered his books, and, what seemed in singular contrast, that drum I told you about was hanging on a nail, just above his head. His face was thin and wasted; there was a red spot on either cheek, and his eyes were very bright and widely opened. He was glad to see me, and when I told him where I was going, he asked a thousand questions about the war. I thought I had thoroughly diverted his mind from its sick and languid fancies, when he suddenly grasped my hand and drew me toward him.

"'Doctor,' said he, in a low whisper, 'you won't laugh at me if I tell you something?'

"'No, certainly not,' I said.

"'You remember that drum?' he said, pointing to the glittering toy that hung against the wall. 'You know, too, how it came to me. A few weeks after Christmas, I was lying half asleep here, and the drum was hanging on the wall, when suddenly I heard it beaten; at first, low and slowly, then faster and louder, until its rolling filled the house. In the middle of the night, I heard it again. I

did not dare to tell anybody about it, but I have heard it every night ever since.'

"He paused and looked anxiously in my face. Sometimes,' he continued, 'it is played softly, sometimes loudly, but always quickening to a long-roll, so loud and alarming that I have looked to see people coming into my room to ask what was the matter. But I think, Doctor, — I think,' he repeated slowly, looking up with painful interest into my face, 'that no one hears it but myself.'

"I thought so, too, but I asked him if he had heard it at any other time.

"'Once or twice in the daytime,' he replied, 'when I have been reading or writing; then very loudly, as though it were angry, and tried in that way to attract my attention away from my books.'

"I looked into his face, and placed my hand upon his pulse. His eyes were very bright, and his pulse a little flurried and quick. I then tried to explain to him that he was very weak, and that his senses were very acute, as most weak people's are; and how that when he read, or grew interested and excited, or when he was tired at night, the throbbing of a big artery made the beating sound he heard. He listened to me with a sad smile of unbelief, but thanked me, and in a little while I went away. But as I was going down stairs, I met the Professor. I gave him my opinion of the case, — well, no matter what it was.

"'He wants fresh air and exercise,' said the Professor, 'and some practical experience of life, sir.' The Professor was not a bad man, but he was a little worried and impatient, and thought — as clever people are apt to think — that things which he did n't understand were either silly or improper.

"I left the city that very day, and in the excitement of battle-fields and hospitals, I forgot all about little Rupert, nor did I hear of him again, until one day, meeting an old classmate in the army, who had known the Professor, he told me that Rupert had become quite insane, and that in one of his paroxysms he had escaped from the house, and as he had never been found, it was feared that he had fallen in the river and was drowned. I was terribly shocked for the moment, as you may imagine; but, dear me, I was living just then among scenes as terrible and shocking, and I had little time to spare to mourn over poor Rupert.

"It was not long after receiving this intelligence that we had a terrible battle, in which a portion of our army was surprised and driven back with great slaughter. I was detached from my brigade to ride over to the battle-field and assist the surgeons of the beaten division, who had more on their hands than they could attend to. When I reached the barn that served for a temporary hospital, I went at once to work. Ah, Bob," said

the Doctor, thoughtfully taking the bright sword from the hands of the half-frightened Bob, and holding it gravely before him, "these pretty playthings are symbols of cruel, ugly realities.

"I turned to a tall, stout Vermonter," he continued very slowly, tracing a pattern on the rug with the point of the scabbard, "who was badly wounded in both thighs, but he held up his hands and begged me to help others first who needed it more than he. I did not at first heed his request, for this kind of unselfishness was very common in the army; but he went on, 'For God's sake, Doctor, leave me here; there is a drummer-boy of our regiment — a mere child — dying, if he is n't dead now. Go, and see him first. He lies over there. He saved more than one life. He was at his post in the panic this morning, and saved the honor of the regiment.' I was so much more impressed by the man's manner than by the substance of his speech, which was, however, corroborated by the other poor fellows stretched around me, that I passed over to where the drummer lay, with his drum beside him. I gave one glance at his face —and — yes, Bob — yes, my children — it *was* Rupert.

"Well! well! it needed not the chalked cross which my brother-surgeons had left upon the rough board whereon he lay to show how urgent was the relief he sought; it needed not the prophetic words

of the Vermonter, nor the damp that mingled with the brown curls that clung to his pale forehead, to show how hopeless it was now. I called him by name. He opened his eyes — larger, I thought, in the new vision that was beginning to dawn upon him — and recognized me. He whispered, 'I 'm glad you are come, but I don't think you can do me any good.'

"I could not tell him a lie. I could not say anything. I only pressed his hand in mine, as he went on.

"'But you will see father, and ask him to forgive me. Nobody is to blame but myself. It was a long time before I understood why the drum came to me that Christmas night, and why it kept calling to me every night, and what it said. I know it now. The work is done, and I am content. Tell father it is better as it is. I should have lived only to worry and perplex him, and something in me tells me this is right.'

"He lay still for a moment, and then, grasping my hand, said, —

"'Hark!'

"I listened, but heard nothing but the suppressed moans of the wounded men around me. 'The drum,' he said faintly; 'don't you hear it? The drum is calling me.'

"He reached out his arm to where it lay, as though he would embrace it.

"'Listen,' he went on, 'it's the reveille. There are the ranks drawn up in review. Don't you see the sunlight flash down the long line of bayonets? Their faces are shining, — they present arms, — there comes the General; but his face I cannot look at, for the glory round his head. He sees me; he smiles, it is —' And with a name upon his lips that he had learned long ago, he stretched himself wearily upon the planks, and lay quite still.

"That's all. No questions now; never mind what became of the drum. Who's that snivelling? Bless my soul, where's my pill-box?"

URBAN SKETCHES.

A VENERABLE IMPOSTOR.

AS I glance across my table, I am somewhat distracted by the spectacle of a venerable head whose crown occasionally appears beyond, at about its level. The apparition of a very small hand — whose fingers are bunchy and have the appearance of being slightly webbed — which is frequently lifted above the table in a vain and impotent attempt to reach the inkstand, always affects me as a novelty at each recurrence of the phenomenon. Yet both the venerable head and bunchy fingers belong to an individual with whom I am familiar, and to whom, for certain reasons hereafter described, I choose to apply the epithet written above this article.

His advent in the family was attended with peculiar circumstances. He was received with some concern — the number of retainers having been increased by one in honor of his arrival. He appeared to be weary, — his pretence was that he had come from a long journey, — so that for days, weeks, and even months, he did not leave his bed except when he was carried. But it was remarkable that his appetite was invariably regu-

lar and healthy, and that his meals, which he required should be brought to him, were seldom rejected. During this time he had little conversation with the family, his knowledge of our vernacular being limited, but occasionally spoke to himself in his own language, — a foreign tongue. The difficulties attending this eccentricity were obviated by the young woman who had from the first taken him under her protection, — being, like the rest of her sex, peculiarly open to impositions, — and who at once disorganized her own tongue to suit his. This was affected by the contraction of the syllables of some words, the addition of syllables to others, and an ingenious disregard for tenses and the governing powers of the verb. The same singular law which impels people in conversation with foreigners to imitate their broken English governed the family in their communications with him. He received these evidences of his power with an indifference not wholly free from scorn. The expression of his eye would occasionally denote that his higher nature revolted from them. I have no doubt myself that his wants were frequently misinterpreted; that the stretching forth of his hands toward the moon and stars might have been the performance of some religious rite peculiar to his own country, which was in ours misconstrued into a desire for physical nourishment. His repetition of the word "goo-

goo," — which was subject to a variety of opposite interpretations, — when taken in conjunction with his size, in my mind seemed to indicate his aboriginal or Aztec origin.

I incline to this belief, as it sustains the impression I have already hinted at, that his extreme youth is a simulation and deceit; that he is really older and has lived before at some remote period, and that his conduct fully justifies his title as A Venerable Impostor. A variety of circumstances corroborate this impression: His tottering walk, which is a senile as well as a juvenile condition; his venerable head, thatched with such imperceptible hair that, at a distance, it looks like a mild aureola, and his imperfect dental exhibition. But beside these physical peculiarities may be observed certain moral symptoms, which go to disprove his assumed youth. He is in the habit of falling into reveries, caused, I have no doubt, by some circumstance which suggests a comparison with his experience in his remoter boyhood, or by some serious retrospection of the past years. He has been detected lying awake, at times when he should have been asleep, engaged in curiously comparing the bed-clothes, walls, and furniture with some recollection of his youth. At such moments he has been heard to sing softly to himself fragments of some unintelligible composition, which probably still linger in his memory as the echoes of a music

he has long outgrown. He has the habit of receiving strangers with the familiarity of one who had met them before, and to whom their antecedents and peculiarities were matters of old acquaintance, and so unerring is his judgment of their previous character that when he withholds his confidence I am apt to withhold mine. It is somewhat remarkable that while the maturity of his years and the respect due to them is denied by man, his superiority and venerable age is never questioned by the brute creation. The dog treats him with a respect and consideration accorded to none others, and the cat permits a familiarity which I should shudder to attempt. It may be considered an evidence of some Pantheistic quality in his previous education, that he seems to recognize a fellowship even in inarticulate objects; he has been known to verbally address plants, flowers, and fruit, and to extend his confidence to such inanimate objects as chairs and tables. There can be little doubt that, in the remote period of his youth, these objects were endowed with not only sentient natures, but moral capabilities, and he is still in the habit of beating them when they collide with him, and of pardoning them with a kiss.

As he has grown older — rather let me say, as we have approximated to his years — he has, in spite of the apparent paradox, lost much of his senile gravity. It must be confessed that some of

his actions of late appear to our imperfect comprehension inconsistent with his extreme age. A habit of marching up and down with a string tied to a soda-water bottle, a disposition to ride anything that could by any exercise of the liveliest fancy be made to assume equine proportions, a propensity to blacken his venerable white hair with ink and coal dust, and an omnivorous appetite which did not stop at chalk, clay, or cinders, were peculiarities not calculated to excite respect. In fact, he would seem to have become demoralized, and when, after a prolonged absence the other day, he was finally discovered standing upon the front steps addressing a group of delighted children out of his limited vocabulary, the circumstance could only be accounted for as the garrulity of age.

But I lay aside my pen amidst an ominous silence and the disappearance of the venerable head from my plane of vision. As I step to the other side of the table, I find that sleep has overtaken him in an overt act of hoary wickedness. The very pages I have devoted to an exposition of his deceit he has quietly abstracted, and I find them covered with cabalistic figures and wild-looking hieroglyphs traced with his forefinger dipped in ink, which doubtless in his own language conveys a scathing commentary on my composition. But he sleeps peacefully, and there is something in his face which tells me that he has already wandered

away to that dim region of his youth where I cannot follow him. And as there comes a strange stirring at my heart when I contemplate the immeasurable gulf which lies between us, and how slight and feeble as yet is his grasp on this world and its strange realities, I find, too late, that I also am a willing victim of the Venerable Impostor.

FROM A BALCONY.

THE little stone balcony, which, by a popular fallacy, is supposed to be a necessary appurtenance of my window, has long been to me a source of curious interest. The fact that the asperities of our summer weather will not permit me to use it but once or twice in six months does not alter my concern for this incongruous ornament. It affects me as I suppose the conscious possession of a linen coat or a nankeen trousers might affect a sojourner here who has not entirely outgrown his memory of Eastern summer heat and its glorious compensations,— a luxurious providence against a possible but by no means probable contingency. I do no longer wonder at the persistency with which San Franciscans adhere to this architectural superfluity in the face of climatical impossibilities. The balconies in which no one sits, the piazzas on which no one lounges, are timid advances made to a climate whose churlishness we are trying to temper by an ostentation of confidence. Ridiculous as this spectacle is at all seasons, it is never more so than in that bleak interval between sunset and dark, when the shrill scream

of the factory whistle seems to have concentrated all the hard, unsympathetic quality of the climate into one vocal expression. Add to this the appearance of one or two pedestrians, manifestly too late for their dinners, and tasting in the shrewish air a bitter premonition of the welcome that awaits them at home, and you have one of those ordinary views from my balcony which makes the balcony itself ridiculous.

But as I lean over its balustrade to-night — a night rare in its kindness and beauty — and watch the fiery ashes of my cigar drop into the abysmal darkness below, I am inclined to take back the whole of that preceding paragraph, although it cost me some labor to elaborate its polite malevolence. I can even recognize some melody in the music which comes irregularly and fitfully from the balcony of the Museum on Market Street, although it may be broadly stated that, as a general thing, the music of all museums, menageries, and circuses becomes greatly demoralized, — possibly through associations with the beasts. So soft and courteous is this atmosphere that I have detected the flutter of one or two light dresses on the adjacent balconies and piazzas, and the front parlor windows of a certain aristocratic mansion in the vicinity, which have always maintained a studious reserve in regard to the interior, to-night are suddenly thrown into the attitude of familiar dis-

closure. A few young people are strolling up the street with a lounging step which is quite a relief to that usual brisk, business-like pace which the chilly nights impose upon even the most sentimental lovers. The genial influences of the air are not restricted to the opening of shutters and front doors; other and more gentle disclosures are made, no doubt, beneath this moonlight. The bonnet and hat which passed beneath my balcony a few moments ago were suspiciously close together. I argued from this that my friend the editor will probably receive any quantity of verses for his next issue, containing allusions to "Luna," in which the original epithet of "silver" will be applied to this planet, and that a "boon" will be asked for the evident purpose of rhyming with "moon," and for no other. Should neither of the parties be equal to this expression, the pent-up feelings of the heart will probably find vent later in the evening over the piano, in "I wandered by the Brookside," or "When the Moon on the Lake is Beaming." But it has been permitted me to hear the fulfilment of my prophecy even as it was uttered. From the window of number Twelve Hundred and Seven gushes upon the slumberous misty air the maddening ballad, "Ever of Thee," while at Twelve Hundred and Eleven the "Star of the Evening" rises with a chorus. I am inclined to think that there is something in the utter vacuity

of the refrain in this song which especially commends itself to the young. The simple statement, "Star of the evening," is again and again repeated with an imbecile relish; while the adjective "beautiful" recurs with a steady persistency, too exasperating to dwell upon here. At occasional intervals, a base voice enunciates "Star-r! Star-r!" as a solitary and independent effort. Sitting here in my balcony, I picture the possessor of that voice as a small, stout young man, standing a little apart from the other singers, with his hands behind him, under his coat-tail, and a severe expression of countenance. He sometimes leans forward, with a futile attempt to read the music over somebody else's shoulder, but always resumes his old severity of attitude before singing his part. Meanwhile the celestial subjects of this choral adoration look down upon the scene with a tranquillity and patience which can only result from the security with which their immeasurable remoteness invests them. I would remark that the stars are not the only topics subject to this "damnable iteration." A certain popular song, which contains the statement, "I will not forget you, mother," apparently reposes all its popularity on the constant and dreary repetition of this unimportant information, which at least produces the desired result among the audience. If the best operatic choruses are not above this weakness, the unfamiliar language in which they are sung offers less violation to common sense.

It may be parenthetically stated here that the songs alluded to above may be found in sheet music on the top of the piano of any young lady who has just come from boarding-school. "The Old Arm-Chair," or "Woodman, spare that Tree," will be also found in easy juxtaposition. The latter songs are usually brought into service at the instance of an uncle or bachelor brother, whose request is generally prefaced by a remark deprecatory of the opera, and the gratuitous observation that "we are retrograding, sir, — retrograding," and that "there is no music like the old songs." He sometimes condescends to accompany "Marie" in a tremulous barytone, and is particularly forcible in those passages where the word "repeat" is written, for reasons stated above. When the song is over, to the success of which he feels he has materially contributed, he will inform you that you may talk of your "arias," and your "romanzas," "but for music, sir, — music —" at which point he becomes incoherent and unintelligible. It is this gentleman who suggests "China," or "Brattle Street," as a suitable and cheerful exercise for the social circle. There are certain amatory songs, of an arch and coquettish character, familiar to these localities, which the young lady, being called upon to sing, declines with a bashful and tantalizing hesitation. Prominent among these may be mentioned an erotic effusion entitled "I'm

talking in my Sleep," which, when sung by a young person vivaciously and with appropriate glances, can be made to drive languishing swains to the verge of madness. Ballads of this quality afford splendid opportunities for bold young men, who, by ejaculating "Oh!" and "Ah!" at the affecting passages, frequently gain a fascinating reputation for wildness and scepticism.

But the music which called up these parenthetical reflections has died away, and with it the slight animosities it inspired. The last song has been sung, the piano closed, the lights are withdrawn from the windows, and the white skirts flutter away from stoops and balconies. The silence is broken only by the rattle and rumble of carriages coming from theatre and opera. I fancy that this sound — which, seeming to be more distinct at this hour than at any other time, might be called one of the civic voices of the night — has certain urbane suggestions, not unpleasant to those born and bred in large cities. The moon, round and full, gradually usurps the twinkling lights of the city, that one by one seem to fade away and be absorbed in her superior lustre. The distant Mission hills are outlined against the sky, but through one gap the outlying fog which has stealthily invested us seems to have effected a breach, and only waits the co-operation of the laggard sea-breezes to sweep down and take the beleaguered

city by assault. An ineffable calm sinks over the landscape. In the magical moonlight the shot-tower loses its angular outline and practical relations, and becomes a minaret from whose balcony an invisible muezzin calls the Faithful to prayer. "Prayer is better than sleep." But what is this? A shuffle of feet on the pavement, a low hum of voices, a twang of some diabolical instrument, a preliminary hem and cough. Heavens! it cannot be! Ah, yes — it is — it is — SERENADERS!

Anathema Maranatha! May purgatorial pains seize you, William, Count of Poitou, Girard de Boreuil, Arnaud de Marveil, Bertrand de Born, mischievous progenitors of *jongleurs*, troubadours, provençals, minnesingers, minstrels, and singers of *cansos* and love chants! Confusion overtake and confound your modern descendants, the "metre ballad-mongers," who carry the shamelessness of the Middle Ages into the nineteenth century, and awake a sleeping neighborhood to the brazen knowledge of their loves and wanton fancies! Destruction and demoralization pursue these pitiable imitators of a barbarous age, when ladies' names and charms were shouted through the land, and modest maiden never lent presence to tilt or tourney without hearing a chronicle of her virtues go round the lists, shouted by wheezy heralds and taken up by roaring swashbucklers! Perdition overpower such ostentatious wooers! Marry! shall

I shoot the amorous feline who nightly iterates his love songs on my roof, and yet withhold my trigger finger from yonder pranksome gallant? Go to! Here is an orange left of last week's repast. Decay hath overtaken it, — it possesseth neither savor nor cleanliness. Ha! cleverly thrown! A hit — a palpable hit! Peradventure I have still a boot that hath done me service, and, barring a looseness of the heel, an ominous yawning at the side, 't is in good case! Na'theless, 't will serve. So! so! What! dispersed! Nay, then, I too will retire.

MELONS.

AS I do not suppose the most gentle of readers will believe that anybody's sponsors in baptism ever wilfully assumed the responsibility of such a name, I may as well state that I have reason to infer that Melons was simply the nickname of a small boy I once knew. If he had any other, I never knew it.

Various theories were often projected by me to account for this strange cognomen. His head, which was covered with a transparent down, like that which clothes very small chickens, plainly permitting the scalp to show through, to an imaginative mind might have suggested that succulent vegetable. That his parents, recognizing some poetical significance in the fruits of the season, might have given this name to an August child, was an Oriental explanation. That from his infancy, he was fond of indulging in melons, seemed on the whole the most likely, particularly as Fancy was not bred in McGinnis's Court. He dawned upon me as Melons. His proximity was indicated by shrill, youthful voices, as "Ah, Melons!" or playfully, "Hi, Melons!" or authoritatively, "You, Melons!"

McGinnis's Court was a democratic expression of some obstinate and radical property-holder. Occupying a limited space between two fashionable thoroughfares, it refused to conform to circumstances, but sturdily paraded its unkempt glories, and frequently asserted itself in ungrammatical language. My window — a rear room on the ground floor — in this way derived blended light and shadow from the court. So low was the window-sill, that had I been the least predisposed to somnambulism, it would have broken out under such favorable auspices, and I should have haunted McGinnis's Court. My speculations as to the origin of the court were not altogether gratuitous, for by means of this window I once saw the Past, as through a glass darkly. It was a Celtic shadow that early one morning obstructed my ancient lights. It seemed to belong to an individual with a pea-coat, a stubby pipe, and bristling beard. He was gazing intently at the court, resting on a heavy cane, somewhat in the way that heroes dramatically visit the scenes of their boyhood. As there was little of architectural beauty in the court, I came to the conclusion that it was McGinnis looking after his property. The fact that he carefully kicked a broken bottle out of the road somewhat strengthened me in the opinion. But he presently walked away, and the court knew him no more. He probably collected his rents by proxy — if he collected them at all.

Beyond Melons, of whom all this is purely introductory, there was little to interest the most sanguine and hopeful nature. In common with all such localities, a great deal of washing was done, in comparison with the visible results. There was always something whisking on the line, and always something whisking through the court, that looked as if it ought to be there. A fish-geranium — of all plants kept for the recreation of mankind, certainly the greatest illusion — straggled under the window. Through its dusty leaves I caught the first glance of Melons.

His age was about seven. He looked older, from the venerable whiteness of his head, and it was impossible to conjecture his size, as he always wore clothes apparently belonging to some shapely youth of nineteen. A pair of pantaloons, that, when sustained by a single suspender, completely equipped him, formed his every-day suit. How, with this lavish superfluity of clothing, he managed to perform the surprising gymnastic feats it has been my privilege to witness, I have never been able to tell. His "turning the crab," and other minor dislocations, were always attended with success. It was not an unusual sight at any hour of the day to find Melons suspended on a line, or to see his venerable head appearing above the roofs of the outhouses. Melons knew the exact height of every fence in the vicinity, its

facilities for scaling, and the possibility of seizure on the other side. His more peaceful and quieter amusements consisted in dragging a disused boiler by a large string, with hideous outcries, to imaginary fires.

Melons was not gregarious in his habits. A few youth of his own age sometimes called upon him, but they eventually became abusive, and their visits were more strictly predatory incursions for old bottles and junk which formed the staple of McGinnis's Court. Overcome by loneliness one day, Melons inveigled a blind harper into the court. For two hours did that wretched man prosecute his unhallowed calling, unrecompensed, and going round and round the court, apparently under the impression that it was some other place, while Melons surveyed him from an adjoining fence with calm satisfaction. It was this absence of conscientious motives that brought Melons into disrepute with his aristocratic neighbors. Orders were issued that no child of wealthy and pious parentage should play with him. This mandate, as a matter of course, invested Melons with a fascinating interest to them. Admiring glances were cast at Melons from nursery windows. Baby fingers beckoned to him. Invitations to tea (on wood and pewter) were lisped to him from aristocratic back-yards. It was evident he was looked upon as a pure and noble being, untrammelled by the

conventionalities of parentage, and physically as well as mentally exalted above them. One afternoon an unusual commotion prevailed in the vicinity of McGinnis's Court. Looking from my window I saw Melons perched on the roof of a stable, pulling up a rope by which one "Tommy," an infant scion of an adjacent and wealthy house, was suspended in mid-air. In vain the female relatives of Tommy congregated in the back-yard, expostulated with Melons; in vain the unhappy father shook his fist at him. Secure in his position, Melons redoubled his exertions and at last landed Tommy on the roof. Then it was that the humiliating fact was disclosed that Tommy had been acting in collusion with Melons. He grinned delightedly back at his parents, as if "by merit raised to that bad eminence." Long before the ladder arrived that was to succor him, he became the sworn ally of Melons, and, I regret to say, incited by the same audacious boy, "chaffed" his own flesh and blood below him. He was eventually taken, though, of course, Melons escaped. But Tommy was restricted to the window after that, and the companionship was limited to "Hi, Melons!" and "You, Tommy!" and Melons, to all practical purposes, lost him forever. I looked afterward to see some signs of sorrow on Melons's part, but in vain; he buried his grief, if he had any, somewhere in his one voluminous garment.

At about this time my opportunities of knowing Melons became more extended. I was engaged in filling a void in the Literature of the Pacific Coast. As this void was a pretty large one, and as I was informed that the Pacific Coast languished under it, I set apart two hours each day to this work of filling in. It was necessary that I should adopt a methodical system, so I retired from the world and locked myself in my room at a certain hour each day, after coming from my office. I then carefully drew out my portfolio and read what I had written the day before. This would suggest some alteration, and I would carefully rewrite it. During this operation I would turn to consult a book of reference, which invariably proved extremely interesting and attractive. It would generally suggest another and better method of "filling in." Turning this method over reflectively in my mind, I would finally commence the new method which I eventually abandoned for the original plan. At this time I would become convinced that my exhausted faculties demanded a cigar. The operation of lighting a cigar usually suggested that a little quiet reflection and meditation would be of service to me, and I always allowed myself to be guided by prudential instincts. Eventually, seated by my window, as before stated, Melons asserted himself, Though our conversation rarely went further than "Hello, Mister!" and "Ah, Melons!" a vagabond

instinct we felt in common implied a communion deeper than words. In this spiritual commingling the time passed, often beguiled by gymnastics on the fence or line (always with an eye to my window) until dinner was announced and I found a more practical void required my attention. An unlooked for incident drew us in closer relation.

A sea-faring friend just from a tropical voyage had presented me with a bunch of bananas. They were not quite ripe, and I hung them before my window to mature in the sun of McGinnis's Court, whose forcing qualities were remarkable. In the mysteriously mingled odors of ship and shore which they diffused throughout my room, there was a lingering reminiscence of low latitudes. But even that joy was fleeting and evanescent: they never reached maturity.

Coming home one day, as I turned the corner of that fashionable thoroughfare before alluded to, I met a small boy eating a banana. There was nothing remarkable in that, but as I neared McGinnis's Court I presently met another small boy, also eating a banana. A third small boy engaged in a like occupation obtruded a painful coincidence upon my mind. I leave the psychological reader to determine the exact co-relation between this circumstance and the sickening sense of loss that overcame me on witnessing it. I reached my room — and found the bunch of bananas was gone.

There was but one who knew of their existence, but one who frequented my window, but one capable of the gymnastic effort to procure them, and that was — I blush to say it — Melons. Melons the depredator — Melons, despoiled by larger boys of his ill-gotten booty, or reckless and indiscreetly liberal; Melons — now a fugitive on some neighboring house-top. I lit a cigar, and, drawing my chair to the window, sought surcease of sorrow in the contemplation of the fish-geranium. In a few moments something white passed my window at about the level of the edge. There was no mistaking that hoary head, which now represented to me only aged iniquity. It was Melons, that venerable, juvenile hypocrite.

He affected not to observe me, and would have withdrawn quietly, but that horrible fascination which causes the murderer to revisit the scene of his crime, impelled him toward my window. I smoked calmly and gazed at him without speaking. He walked several times up and down the court with a half-rigid, half-belligerent expression of eye and shoulder, intended to represent the carelessness of innocence.

Once or twice he stopped, and putting his arms their whole length into his capacious trousers, gazed with some interest at the additional width they thus acquired. Then he whistled. The singular conflicting conditions of John Brown's body

and soul were at that time beginning to attract the attention of youth, and Melons's performance of that melody was always remarkable. But to-day he whistled falsely and shrilly between his teeth. At last he met my eye. He winced slightly, but recovered himself, and going to the fence, stood for a few moments on his hands, with his bare feet quivering in the air. Then he turned toward me and threw out a conversational preliminary.

"They is a cirkis" — said Melons gravely, hanging with his back to the fence and his arms twisted around the palings — "a cirkis over yonder!" — indicating the locality with his foot — "with hosses, and hossback riders. They is a man wot rides six hosses to onct — six hosses to onct — and nary saddle" — and he paused in expectation.

Even this equestrian novelty did not affect me. I still kept a fixed gaze on Melons's eye, and he began to tremble and visibly shrink in his capacious garment. Some other desperate means — conversation with Melons was always a desperate means — must be resorted to. He recommenced more artfully.

"Do you know Carrots?"

I had a faint remembrance of a boy of that euphonious name, with scarlet hair, who was a playmate and persecutor of Melons. But I said nothing.

"Carrots is a bad boy. Killed a policeman onct.

Wears a dirk knife in his boots, saw him to-day looking in your windy."

I felt that this must end here. I rose sternly and addressed Melons.

"Melons, this is all irrelevant and impertinent to the case. *You* took those bananas. Your proposition regarding Carrots, even if I were inclined to accept it as credible information, does not alter the material issue. You took those bananas. The offence under the statutes of California is felony. How far Carrots may have been accessory to the fact either before or after, is not my intention at present to discuss. The act is complete. Your present conduct shows the *animo furandi* to have been equally clear."

By the time I had finished this exordium, Melons had disappeared, as I fully expected.

He never reappeared. The remorse that I have experienced for the part I had taken in what I fear may have resulted in his utter and complete extermination, alas, he may not know, except through these pages. For I have never seen him since. Whether he ran away and went to sea to reappear at some future day as the most ancient of mariners, or whether he buried himself completely in his trousers, I never shall know. I have read the papers anxiously for accounts of him. I have gone to the Police Office in the vain attempt of identifying him as a lost child. But I never saw

him or heard of him since. Strange fears have sometimes crossed my mind that his venerable appearance may have been actually the result of senility, and that he may have been gathered peacefully to his fathers in a green old age. I have even had doubts of his existence, and have sometimes thought that he was providentially and mysteriously offered to fill the void I have before alluded to. In that hope I have written these pages.

SURPRISING ADVENTURES OF MASTER CHARLES SUMMERTON.

AT exactly half past nine o'clock on the morning of Saturday, August 26, 1865, Master Charles Summerton, aged five years, disappeared mysteriously from his paternal residence on Folsom Street, San Francisco. At twenty-five minutes past nine he had been observed, by the butcher, amusing himself by going through that popular youthful exercise known as "turning the crab," a feat in which he was singularly proficient. At a court of inquiry summarily held in the back parlor at 10.15, Bridget, cook, deposed to have detected him at twenty minutes past nine, in the felonious abstraction of sugar from the pantry, which, by the same token, had she known what was a-comin', she 'd have never previnted. Patsey, a shrill-voiced youth from a neighboring alley, testified to have seen "Chowley" at half past nine, in front of the butcher's shop round the corner, but as this young gentleman chose to throw out the gratuitous belief that the missing child had been converted into sausages by the butcher, his testimony was received with some caution by the female portion of

the court, and with downright scorn and contumely by its masculine members. But whatever might have been the hour of his departure, it was certain that from half past ten A. M. until nine P. M., when he was brought home by a policeman, Charles Summerton was missing. Being naturally of a reticent disposition, he has since resisted, with but one exception, any attempt to wrest from him a statement of his whereabouts during that period. That exception has been myself. He has related to me the following in the strictest confidence.

His intention on leaving the door-steps of his dwelling was to proceed without delay to Van Dieman's Land, by way of Second and Market streets. This project was subsequently modified so far as to permit a visit to Otaheite, where Captain Cook was killed. The outfit for his voyage consisted of two car-tickets, five cents in silver, a fishing-line, the brass capping of a spool of cotton, which, in his eyes, bore some resemblance to metallic currency, and a Sunday-school library ticket. His garments, admirably adapted to the exigencies of any climate, were severally a straw hat with a pink ribbon, a striped shirt, over which a pair of trousers, uncommonly wide in comparison to their length, were buttoned, striped balmoral stockings, which gave his youthful legs something of the appearance of wintergreen candy, and copper-toed shoes with iron heels, capable of striking fire from any flag-

stone. This latter quality, Master Charley could not help feeling, would be of infinite service to him in the wilds of Van Dieman's Land, which, as pictorially represented in his geography, seemed to be deficient in corner groceries and matches.

Exactly as the clock struck the half-hour, the short legs and straw hat of Master Charles Summerton disappeared around the corner. He ran rapidly, partly by way of inuring himself to the fatigues of the journey before him, and partly by way of testing his speed with that of a North Beach car which was proceeding in his direction. The conductor, not being aware of this generous and lofty emulation, and being somewhat concerned at the spectacle of a pair of very short, twinkling legs so far in the rear, stopped his car and generously assisted the youthful Summerton upon the platform. From this point a hiatus of several hours' duration occurs in Charles's narrative. He is under the impression that he "rode out" not only his two tickets, but that he became subsequently indebted to the company for several trips to and from the opposite termini, and that at last, resolutely refusing to give any explanation of his conduct, he was finally ejected, much to his relief, on a street corner. Although, as he informs us, he felt perfectly satisfied with this arrangement, he was impelled under the circumstances to hurl after the conductor an opprobrious appellation which he had ascertained

from Patsey was the correct thing in such emergencies, and possessed peculiarly exasperating properties.

We now approach a thrilling part of the narrative, before which most of the adventures of the "Boys' Own Book" pale into insignificance. There are times when the recollection of this adventure causes Master Charles to break out in a cold sweat, and he has several times since its occurrence been awakened by lamentations and outcries in the night season by merely dreaming of it. On the corner of the street lay several large empty sugar hogsheads. A few young gentlemen disported themselves therein, armed with sticks, with which they removed the sugar which still adhered to the joints of the staves, and conveyed it to their mouths. Finding a cask not yet preëmpted, Master Charles set to work, and for a few moments revelled in a wild saccharine dream, whence he was finally roused by an angry voice and the rapidly retreating footsteps of his comrades. An ominous sound smote his ear, and the next moment he felt the cask wherein he lay uplifted and set upright against the wall. He was a prisoner, but as yet undiscovered. Being satisfied in his mind that hanging was the systematic and legalized penalty for the outrage he had committed, he kept down manfully the cry that rose to his lips.

In a few moments he felt the cask again lifted

by a powerful hand, which appeared above him at the edge of his prison, and which he concluded belonged to the ferocious giant Blunderbore, whose features and limbs he had frequently met in colored pictures. Before he could recover from his astonishment, his cask was placed with several others on a cart, and rapidly driven away. The ride which ensued he describes as being fearful in the extreme. Rolled around like a pill in a box, the agonies which he suffered may be hinted at, not spoken. Evidences of that protracted struggle were visible in his garments, which were of the consistency of syrup, and his hair, which for several hours, under the treatment of hot water, yielded a thin treacle. At length the cart stopped on one of the wharves, and the cartman began to unload. As he tilted over the cask in which Charles lay, an exclamation broke from his lips, and the edge of the cask fell from his hands, sliding its late occupant upon the wharf. To regain his short legs, and to put the greatest possible distance between himself and the cartman, were his first movements on regaining his liberty. He did not stop until he reached the corner of Front Street.

Another blank succeeds in this veracious history. He cannot remember how or when he found himself in front of the circus tent. He has an indistinct recollection of having passed through a long street of stores which were all closed, and which

made him fear that it was Sunday, and that he had spent a miserable night in the sugar cask. But he remembers hearing the sound of music within the tent, and of creeping on his hands and knees, when no one was looking, until he passed under the canvas. His description of the wonders contained within that circle; of the terrific feats which were performed by a man on a pole, since practised by him in the back yard; of the horses, one of which was spotted and resembled an animal in his Noah's Ark, hitherto unrecognized and undefined; of the female equestrians, whose dresses could only be equalled in magnificence by the frocks of his sister's doll; of the painted clown, whose jokes excited a merriment, somewhat tinged by an undefined fear, was an effort of language which this pen could but weakly transcribe, and which no quantity of exclamation points could sufficiently illustrate. He is not quite certain what followed. He remembers that almost immediately on leaving the circus it became dark, and that he fell asleep, waking up at intervals on the corners of the streets, on front steps, in somebody's arms, and finally in his own bed. He was not aware of experiencing any regret for his conduct; he does not recall feeling at any time a disposition to go home; he remembers distinctly that he felt hungry.

He has made this disclosure in confidence. He wishes it to be respected. He wants to know if you have five cents about you.

SIDEWALKINGS.

THE time occupied in walking to and from my business I have always found to yield me a certain mental enjoyment which no other part of the twenty-four hours could give. Perhaps the physical exercise may have acted as a gentle stimulant of the brain, but more probably the comfortable consciousness that I could not reasonably be expected to be doing anything else — to be studying or improving my mind, for instance — always gave a joyous liberty to my fancy. I once thought it necessary to employ this interval in doing sums in arithmetic, — in which useful study I was and still am lamentably deficient, — but after one or two attempts at peripatetic computation, I gave it up. I am satisfied that much enjoyment is lost to the world by this nervous anxiety to improve our leisure moments, which, like the "shining hours" of Dr. Watts, unfortunately offer the greatest facilities for idle pleasure. I feel a profound pity for those misguided beings who are still impelled to carry text-books with them in cars, omnibuses, and ferry-boats, and who generally manage to defraud themselves of those intervals of rest they most require.

Nature must have her fallow moments, when she covers her exhausted fields with flowers instead of grain. Deny her this, and the next crop suffers for it. I offer this axiom as some apology for obtruding upon the reader a few of the speculations which have engaged my mind during these daily perambulations.

Few Californians know how to lounge gracefully. Business habits, and a deference to the custom, even with those who have no business, give an air of restless anxiety to every pedestrian. The exceptions to this rule are apt to go to the other extreme, and wear a defiant, obtrusive kind of indolence which suggests quite as much inward disquiet and unrest. The shiftless lassitude of a gambler can never be mistaken for the lounge of a gentleman. Even the brokers who loiter upon Montgomery Street at high noon are not loungers. Look at them closely and you will see a feverishness and anxiety under the mask of listlessness. They do not lounge — they lie in wait. No surer sign, I imagine, of our peculiar civilization can be found than this lack of repose in its constituent elements. You cannot keep Californians quiet even in their amusements. They dodge in and out of the theatre, opera, and lecture-room; they prefer the street cars to walking because they think they get along faster. The difference of locomotion between Broadway, New York, and Montgomery Street, San Francisco, is a

comparative view of Eastern and Western civilization.

There is a habit peculiar to many walkers, which Punch, some years ago, touched upon satirically, but which seems to have survived the jester's ridicule. It is that custom of stopping friends in the street, to whom we have nothing whatever to communicate, but whom we embarrass for no other purpose than simply to show our friendship. Jones meets his friend Smith, whom he has met in nearly the same locality but a few hours before. During that interval, it is highly probable that no event of any importance to Smith, nor indeed to Jones, which by a friendly construction Jones could imagine Smith to be interested in, has occurred, or is likely to occur. Yet both gentlemen stop and shake hands earnestly. "Well, how goes it?" remarks Smith with a vague hope that something may have happened. "So so," replies the eloquent Jones, feeling intuitively the deep vacuity of his friend answering to his own. A pause ensues, in which both gentlemen regard each other with an imbecile smile and a fervent pressure of the hand. Smith draws a long breath and looks up the street; Jones sighs heavily and gazes down the street. Another pause, in which both gentlemen disengage their respective hands and glance anxiously around for some conventional avenue of escape. Finally, Smith (with a sudden assumption of having for-

gotten an important engagement) ejaculates, "Well, I must be off," — a remark instantly echoed by the voluble Jones, and these gentlemen separate, only to repeat their miserable formula the next day. In the above example I have compassionately shortened the usual leave-taking, which, in skilful hands, may be protracted to a length which I shudder to recall. I have sometimes, when an active participant in these atrocious transactions, lingered in the hope of saying something natural to my friend (feeling that he, too, was groping in the mazy labyrinths of his mind for a like expression), until I have felt that we ought to have been separated by a policeman. It is astonishing how far the most wretched joke will go in these emergencies, and how it will, as it were, convulsively detach the two cohering particles. I have laughed (albeit hysterically) at some witticism under cover of which I escaped, that five minutes afterward I could not perceive possessed a grain of humor. I would advise any person who may fall into this pitiable strait, that, next to getting in the way of a passing dray and being forcibly disconnected, a joke is the most efficacious. A foreign phrase often may be tried with success; I have sometimes known *Au revoir* pronounced "O-reveer," to have the effect (as it ought) of severing friends.

But this is a harmless habit compared to a certain reprehensible practice in which sundry feeble-

minded young men indulge. I have been stopped in the street and enthusiastically accosted by some fashionable young man, who has engaged me in animated conversation, until (quite accidentally) a certain young belle would pass, whom my friend, of course, saluted. As, by a strange coincidence, this occurred several times in the course of the week, and as my young friend's conversational powers invariably flagged after the lady had passed, I am forced to believe that the deceitful young wretch actually used me as a conventional background to display the graces of his figure to the passing fair. When I detected the trick, of course I made a point of keeping my friend, by strategic movements, with his back toward the young lady, while I bowed to her myself. Since then, I understand that it is a regular custom of these callow youths to encounter each other, with simulated cordiality, some paces in front of the young lady they wish to recognize, so that she cannot possibly cut them. The corner of California and Montgomery streets is their favorite haunt. They may be easily detected by their furtive expression of eye, which betrays them even in the height of their apparent enthusiasm.

Speaking of eyes, you can generally settle the average gentility and good breeding of the people you meet in the street by the manner in which they return or evade your glance. "A gentleman,"

as the Autocrat has wisely said, is always "calm-eyed." There is just enough abstraction in his look to denote his individual power and the capacity for self-contemplation, while he is, nevertheless, quietly and unobtrusively observant. He does not seek, neither does he evade your observation. Snobs and prigs do the first; bashful and mean people do the second. There are some men who, on meeting your eye, immediately assume an expression quite different from the one which they previously wore, which, whether an improvement or not, suggests a disagreeable self-consciousness. Perhaps they fancy they are betraying something. There are others who return your look with unnecessary defiance, which suggests a like concealment. The symptoms of the eye are generally borne out in the figure. A man is very apt to betray his character by the manner in which he appropriates his part of the sidewalk. The man who resolutely keeps the middle of the pavement, and deliberately brushes against you, you may be certain would take the last piece of pie at the hotel table, and empty the cream-jug on its way to your cup. The man who sidles by you, keeping close to the houses, and selecting the easiest planks, manages to slip through life in some such way, and to evade its sternest duties. The awkward man, who gets in your way, and throws you back upon the man behind you, and so manages to derange the

harmonious procession of an entire block, is very apt to do the same thing in political and social economy. The inquisitive man, who deliberately shortens his pace, so that he may participate in the confidence you impart to your companion, has an eye not unfamiliar to keyholes, and probably opens his wife's letters. The loud man, who talks with the intention of being overheard, is the same egotist elsewhere. If there was any justice in Iago's sneer, that there were some "so weak of soul that in their sleep they mutter their affairs," what shall be said of the walking revery-babblers? I have met men who were evidently rolling over, "like a sweet morsel under the tongue," some speech they were about to make, and others who were framing curses. I remember once that, while walking behind an apparently respectable old gentleman, he suddenly uttered the exclamation, "Well, I 'm d—d!" and then quietly resumed his usual manner. Whether he had at that moment become impressed with a truly orthodox disbelief in his ultimate salvation, or whether he was simply indignant, I never could tell.

I have been hesitating for some time to speak — or if indeed to speak at all—of that lovely and critic-defying sex, whose bright eyes and voluble prattle have not been without effect in tempering the austerities of my peripatetic musing. I have been humbly thankful that I have been permitted to

view their bright dresses and those charming bonnets which seem to have brought the birds and flowers of spring within the dreary limits of the town, and — I trust I shall not be deemed unkind in saying it — my pleasure was not lessened by the reflection that the display, to me at least, was inexpensive. I have walked in — and I fear occasionally on — the train of the loveliest of her sex who has preceded me. If I have sometimes wondered why two young ladies always began to talk vivaciously on the approach of any good-looking fellow; if I have wondered whether the mirror-like qualities of all large show-windows at all influenced their curiosity regarding silks and calicoes; if I have ever entertained the same ungentlemanly thought concerning daguerreotype show-cases; if I have ever misinterpreted the eye-shot which has passed between two pretty women — more searching, exhaustive and sincere than any of our feeble ogles; if I have ever committed these or any other impertinences, it was only to retire beaten and discomfited, and to confess that masculine philosophy, while it soars beyond Sirius and the ring of Saturn, stops short at the steel periphery which encompasses the simplest school-girl.

A BOYS' DOG.

AS I lift my eyes from the paper, I observe a dog lying on the steps of the opposite house. His attitude might induce passers-by and casual observers to believe him to belong to the people who live there, and to accord to him a certain standing position. I have seen visitors pat him, under the impression that they were doing an act of courtesy to his master, he lending himself to the fraud by hypocritical contortions of the body. But his attitude is one of deceit and simulation. He has neither master nor habitation. He is a very Pariah and outcast; in brief, "A Boys' Dog."

There is a degree of hopeless and irreclaimable vagabondage expressed in this epithet, which may not be generally understood. Only those who are familiar with the roving nature and predatory instincts of boys in large cities will appreciate its strength. It is the lowest step in the social scale to which a respectable canine can descend. A blind man's dog, or the companion of a knife-grinder, is comparatively elevated. He at least owes allegiance to but one master. But the Boys' Dog is the thrall of an entire juvenile community,

obedient to the beck and call of the smallest imp in the neighborhood, attached to and serving not the individual boy so much as the boy element and principle. In their active sports, in small thefts, raids into back-yards, window-breaking, and other minor juvenile recreations, he is a full participant. In this way he is the reflection of the wickedness of many masters, without possessing the virtues or peculiarities of any particular one.

If leading a "dog's life" be considered a peculiar phase of human misery, the life of a Boys' Dog is still more infelicitous. He is associated in all schemes of wrong-doing, and unless he be a dog of experience is always the scapegoat. He never shares the booty of his associates. In absence of legitimate amusement, he is considered fair game for his companions; and I have seen him reduced to the ignominy of having a tin kettle tied to his tail. His ears and tail have generally been docked to suit the caprice of the unholy band of which he is a member; and if he has any spunk, he is invariably pitted against larger dogs in mortal combat. He is poorly fed and hourly abused; the reputation of his associates debars him from outside sympathies; and once a Boys' Dog, he cannot change his condition. He is not unfrequently sold into slavery by his inhuman companions. I remember once to have been accosted on my own doorsteps by a couple of precocious youths, who

offered to sell me a dog which they were then leading by a rope. The price was extremely moderate, being, if I remember rightly, but fifty cents. Imagining the unfortunate animal to have lately fallen into their wicked hands, and anxious to reclaim him from the degradation of becoming a Boys' Dog, I was about to conclude the bargain, when I saw a look of intelligence pass between the dog and his two masters. I promptly stopped all negotiation, and drove the youthful swindlers and their four-footed accomplice from my presence. The whole thing was perfectly plain. The dog was an old, experienced, and hardened Boys' Dog, and I was perfectly satisfied that he would run away and rejoin his old companions at the first opportunity. This I afterwards learned he did, on the occasion of a kind-hearted but unsophisticated neighbor buying him; and a few days ago I saw him exposed for sale by those two Arcadians, in another neighborhood, having been bought and paid for half a dozen times in this.

But, it will be asked, if the life of a Boys' Dog is so unhappy, why do they enter upon such an unenviable situation, and why do they not dissolve the partnership when it becomes unpleasant? I will confess that I have been often puzzled by this question. For some time I could not make up my mind whether their unholy alliance was the result of the influence of the dog on the boy, or *vice versa*,

and which was the weakest and most impressible nature. I am satisfied now that, at first, the dog is undoubtedly influenced by the boy, and, as it were, is led, while yet a puppy, from the paths of canine rectitude by artful and designing boys. As he grows older and more experienced in the ways of his Bohemian friends, he becomes a willing decoy, and takes delight in leading boyish innocence astray, in beguiling children to play truant, and thus revenges his own degradation on the boy nature generally. It is in this relation, and in regard to certain unhallowed practices I have detected him in, that I deem it proper to expose to parents and guardians the danger to which their offspring is exposed by the Boys' Dog.

The Boys' Dog lays his plans artfully. He begins to influence the youthful mind by suggestions of unrestrained freedom and frolic which he offers in his own person. He will lie in wait at the garden gate for a very small boy, and endeavor to lure him outside its sacred precincts, by gambolling and jumping a little beyond the inclosure. He will set off on an imaginary chase and run around the block in a perfectly frantic manner, and then return, breathless, to his former position, with a look as of one who would say, "There, you see how perfectly easy it 's done!" Should the unhappy infant find it difficult to resist the effect which this glimpse of the area of freedom pro-

duces, and step beyond the gate, from that moment he is utterly demoralized. The Boys' Dog owns him body and soul. Straightway he is led by the deceitful brute into the unhallowed circle of his Bohemian masters. Sometimes the unfortunate boy, if he be very small, turns up eventually at the station-house as a lost child. Whenever I meet a stray boy in the street looking utterly bewildered and astonished, I generally find a Boys' Dog lurking on the corner. When I read the advertisements of lost children, I always add mentally to the description, "was last seen in company with a Boys' Dog." Nor is his influence wholly confined to small boys. I have seen him waiting patiently for larger boys on the way to school, and by artful and sophistical practices inducing them to play truant. I have seen him lying at the school-house door, with the intention of enticing the children on their way home to distant and remote localities. He has led many an unsuspecting boy to the wharves and quays by assuming the character of a water-dog, which he was not, and again has induced others to go with him on a gunning excursion by pretending to be a sporting dog, in which quality he was knowingly deficient. Unscrupulous, hypocritical, and deceitful, he has won many children's hearts by answering to any name they might call him, attaching himself to their persons until they got into trouble, and deserting

them at the very moment they most needed his assistance. I have seen him rob small school-boys of their dinners by pretending to knock them down by accident; and have seen larger boys in turn dispossess him of his ill-gotten booty for their own private gratification. From being a tool, he has grown to be an accomplice; through much imposition, he has learned to impose on others; in his best character, he is simply a vagabond's vagabond.

I could find it in my heart to pity him, as he lies there through the long summer afternoon, enjoying brief intervals of tranquillity and rest which he surreptitiously snatches from a stranger's doorstep. For a shrill whistle is heard in the streets, the boys are coming home from school, and he is startled from his dreams by a deftly thrown potato, which hits him on the head, and awakens him to the stern reality that he is now and forever — a Boys' Dog.

CHARITABLE REMINISCENCES.

AS the new Benevolent Association has had the effect of withdrawing beggars from the streets, and as Professional Mendicancy bids fair to be presently ranked with the Lost Arts, to preserve some records of this noble branch of industry, I have endeavored to recall certain traits and peculiarities of individual members of the order whom I have known, and whose forms I now miss from their accustomed haunts. In so doing, I confess to feeling a certain regret at this decay of Professional Begging, for I hold the theory that mankind are bettered by the occasional spectacle of misery, whether simulated or not, on the same principle that our sympathies are enlarged by the fictitious woes of the Drama, though we know that the actors are insincere. Perhaps I am indiscreet in saying that I have rewarded the artfully dressed and well-acted performance of the begging impostor through the same impulse that impelled me to expend a dollar in witnessing the counterfeited sorrows of poor "Triplet," as represented by Charles Wheatleigh. I did not quarrel with deceit in either case. My coin was given in recognition of the sentiment;

the moral responsibility rested with the performer.

The principal figure that I now mourn over as lost forever is one that may have been familiar to many of my readers. It was that of a dark-complexioned, black-eyed, foreign-looking woman, who supported in her arms a sickly baby. As a pathological phenomenon the baby was especially interesting, having presented the Hippocratic face and other symptoms of immediate dissolution, without change, for the past three years. The woman never verbally solicited alms. Her appearance was always mute, mysterious, and sudden. She made no other appeal than that which the dramatic tableau of herself and baby suggested, with an outstretched hand and deprecating eye sometimes superadded. She usually stood in my doorway, silent and patient, intimating her presence, if my attention were preoccupied, by a slight cough from her baby, whom I shall always believe had its part to play in this little pantomime, and generally obeyed a secret signal from the maternal hand. It was useless for me to refuse alms, to plead business, or affect inattention. She never moved; her position was always taken with an appearance of latent capabilities of endurance and experience in waiting which never failed to impress me with awe and the futility of any hope of escape. There was also something in the reproachful expression of her eye which

plainly said to me, as I bent over my paper, 'Go on with your mock sentimentalities and simulated pathos; portray the imaginary sufferings of your bodiless creations, spread your thin web of philosophy, but look you, sir, here is real misery! Here is genuine suffering!" I confess that this artful suggestion usually brought me down. In three minutes after she had thus invested the citadel I usually surrendered at discretion, without a gun having been fired on either side. She received my offering and retired as mutely and mysteriously as she had appeared. Perhaps it was well for me that she did not know her strength. I might have been forced, had this terrible woman been conscious of her real power, to have borrowed money which I could not pay, or have forged a check to purchase immunity from her awful presence. I hardly know if I make myself understood, and yet I am unable to define my meaning more clearly when I say that there was something in her glance which suggested to the person appealed to, when in the presence of others, a certain idea of some individual responsibility for her sufferings, which, while it never failed to affect him with a mingled sense of ludicrousness and terror, always made an impression of unqualified gravity on the minds of the bystanders. As she has disappeared within the last month, I imagine that she has found a home at the San Francisco Benevolent Association,

— at least, I cannot conceive of any charity, however guarded by wholesome checks or sharp-eyed almoners, that could resist that mute apparition. I should like to go there and inquire about her, and also learn if the baby was convalescent or dead, but I am satisfied that she would rise up, a mute and reproachful appeal, so personal in its artful suggestions, that it would end in the Association instantly transferring her to my hands.

My next familiar mendicant was a vender of printed ballads. These effusions were so stale, atrocious, and unsalable in their character, that it was easy to detect that hypocrisy, which — in imitation of more ambitious beggary — veiled the real eleemosynary appeal under the thin pretext of offering an equivalent. This beggar — an aged female in a rusty bonnet — I unconsciously precipitated upon myself in an evil moment. On our first meeting, while distractedly turning over the ballads, I came upon a certain production entitled, I think, "The Fire Zouave," and was struck with the truly patriotic and American manner in which "Zouave" was made to rhyme in different stanzas with "grave, brave, save, and glaive." As I purchased it at once, with a gratified expression of countenance, it soon became evident that the act was misconstrued by my poor friend, who from that moment never ceased to haunt me. Perhaps in the whole course of her precarious existence

she had never before sold a ballad. My solitary purchase evidently made me, in her eyes, a customer, and in a measure exalted her vocation; so thereafter she regularly used to look in at my door, with a chirping, confident air, and the question, "Any more songs to-day?" as though it were some necessary article of daily consumption. I never took any more of her songs, although that circumstance did not shake her faith in my literary taste; my abstinence from this exciting mental pabulum being probably ascribed to charitable motives. She was finally absorbed by the S. F. B. A., who have probably made a proper disposition of her effects. She was a little old woman, of Celtic origin, predisposed to melancholy, and looking as if she had read most of her ballads.

My next reminiscence takes the shape of a very seedy individual, who had, for three or four years, been vainly attempting to get back to his relatives in Illinois, where sympathizing friends and a comfortable almshouse awaited him. Only a few dollars, he informed me, — the uncontributed remainder of the amount necessary to purchase a steerage ticket, — stood in his way. These last few dollars seem to have been most difficult to get, and he had wandered about, a sort of antithetical Flying Dutchman, forever putting to sea, yet never getting away from shore. He was a "49-er," and had recently been blown up in a tunnel, or had fallen

down a shaft, I forget which. This sad accident obliged him to use large quantities of whiskey as a liniment, which, he informed me, occasioned the mild fragrance which his garments exhaled. Though belonging to the same class, he was not to be confounded with the unfortunate miner who could not get back to his claim without pecuniary assistance, or the desolate Italian, who hopelessly handed you a document in a foreign language, very much bethumbed and illegible, — which, in your ignorance of the tongue, you could n't help suspiciously feeling might have been a price current, but which you could see was proffered as an excuse for alms. Indeed, whenever any stranger handed me, without speaking, an open document, which bore the marks of having been carried in the greasy lining of a hat, I always felt safe in giving him a quarter and dismissing him without further questioning. I always noticed that these circular letters, when written in the vernacular, were remarkable for their beautiful caligraphy and grammatical inaccuracy, and that they all seem to have been written by the same hand. Perhaps indigence exercises a peculiar and equal effect upon the handwriting.

I recall a few occasional mendicants whose faces were less familiar. One afternoon a most extraordinary Irishman, with a black eye, a bruised hat, and other traces of past enjoyment, waited upon

me with a pitiful story of destitution and want, and concluded by requesting the usual trifle. I replied, with some severity, that if I gave him a dime he would probably spend it for drink. "Be Gorra! but you're roight — I wad that!" he answered promptly. I was so much taken aback by this unexpected exhibition of frankness that I instantly handed over the dime. It seems that Truth had survived the wreck of his other virtues; he did get drunk, and, impelled by a like conscientious sense of duty, exhibited himself to me in that state a few hours after, to show that my bounty had not been misapplied.

In spite of the peculiar characters of these reminiscences, I cannot help feeling a certain regret at the decay of Professional Mendicancy. Perhaps it may be owing to a lingering trace of that youthful superstition which saw in all beggars a possible prince or fairy, and invested their calling with a mysterious awe. Perhaps it may be from a belief that there is something in the old-fashioned almsgivings and actual contact with misery that is wholesome for both donor and recipient, and that any system which interposes a third party between them is only putting on a thick glove, which, while it preserves us from contagion, absorbs and deadens the kindly pressure of our hand. It is a very pleasant thing to purchase relief from the annoyance and trouble of having to weigh the claims of

an afflicted neighbor. As I turn over these printed tickets, which the courtesy of the San Francisco Benevolent Association has — by a slight stretch of the imagination in supposing that any sane unfortunate might rashly seek relief from a newspaper office — conveyed to these editorial hands, I cannot help wondering whether, when in our last extremity we come to draw upon the Immeasurable Bounty, it will be necessary to present a ticket.

"SEEING THE STEAMER OFF."

I HAVE sometimes thought, while watching the departure of an Eastern steamer, that the act of parting from friends — so generally one of bitterness and despondency — is made by an ingenious Californian custom to yield a pleasurable excitement. This luxury of leave-taking, in which most Californians indulge, is often protracted to the hauling in of the gang-plank. Those last words, injunctions, promises, and embraces, which are mournful and depressing perhaps in that privacy demanded on other occasions, are here, by reason of their very publicity, of an edifying and exhilarating character. A parting kiss, blown from the deck of a steamer into a miscellaneous crowd, of course loses much of that sacred solemnity with which foolish superstition is apt to invest it. A broadside of endearing epithets, even when properly aimed and apparently raking the whole wharf, is apt to be impotent and harmless. A husband who prefers to embrace his wife for the last time at the door of her stateroom, and finds himself the centre of an admiring group of unconcerned spectators, of course feels himself lifted above any feeling

save that of ludicrousness which the situation suggests. The mother, parting from her offspring, should become a Roman matron under the like influences; the lover who takes leave of his sweetheart is not apt to mar the general hilarity by any emotional folly. In fact, this system of delaying our parting sentiments until the last moment — this removal of domestic scenery and incident to a public theatre — may be said to be worthy of a stoical and democratic people, and is an event in our lives which may be shared with the humblest coal-passer or itinerant vender of oranges. It is a return to that classic out-of-door experience and mingling of public and domestic economy which so ennobled the straight-nosed Athenian.

So universal is this desire to be present at the departure of any steamer that, aside from the regular crowd of loungers who make their appearance confessedly only to look on, there are others who take advantage of the slightest intimacy to go through the leave-taking formula. People whom you have quite forgotten, people to whom you have been lately introduced, suddenly and unexpectedly make their appearance and wring your hands with fervor. The friend, long estranged, forgives you nobly at the last moment, to take advantage of this glorious opportunity of "seeing you off." Your bootmaker, tailor, and hatter — haply with no ulterior motives and unaccompanied by official friends — visit you

with enthusiasm. You find great difficulty in detaching your relatives and acquaintances from the trunks on which they resolutely seat themselves, up to the moment when the paddles are moving, and you are haunted continually by an ill-defined idea that they may be carried off, and foisted on you — with the payment of their passage, which, under the circumstances, you could not refuse — for the rest of the voyage. Your friends will make their appearance at the most inopportune moments, and from the most unexpected places, — dangling from hawsers, climbing up paddle-boxes, and crawling through cabin windows at the imminent peril of their lives. You are nervous and crushed by this added weight of responsibility. Should you be a stranger, you will find any number of people on board, who will cheerfully and at a venture take leave of you on the slightest advances made on your part. A friend of mine assures me that he once parted, with great enthusiasm and cordiality, from a party of gentlemen, to him personally unknown, who had apparently mistaken his state-room. This party, — evidently connected with some fire company, — on comparing notes on the wharf, being somewhat dissatisfied with the result of their performances, afterward rendered my friend's position on the hurricane deck one of extreme peril and inconvenience, by reason of skilfully projected oranges and apples,

accompanied with some invective. Yet there is certainly something to interest us in the examination of that cheerless damp closet, whose painted wooden walls no furniture or company can make habitable, wherein our friend is to spend so many vapid days and restless nights. The sight of these apartments, yclept *state-rooms*, — Heaven knows why, except it be from their want of cosiness, — is full of keen reminiscences to most Californians who have not outgrown the memories of that dreary interval when, in obedience to nature's wise compensations, homesickness was blotted out by sea-sickness, and both at last resolved into a chaotic and distempered dream, whose details we now recognize. The steamer chair that we used to drag out upon the narrow strip of deck and doze in, over the pages of a well-thumbed novel; the deck itself, of afternoons, redolent with the skins of oranges and bananas, of mornings, damp with salt-water and mopping; the netted bulwark, smelling of tar in the tropics, and fretted on the weather side with little saline crystals; the villanously compounded odors of victuals from the pantry, and oil from the machinery; the young lady that we used to flirt with, and with whom we shared our last novel, adorned with marginal annotations; our own chum; our own bore; the man who was never sea-sick; the two events of the day, breakfast and dinner, and the dreary in-

terval between; the tremendous importance given to trifling events and trifling people; the young lady who kept a journal; the newspaper, published on board, filled with mild pleasantries and impertinences, elsewhere unendurable; the young lady who sang; the wealthy passenger; the popular passenger; the —

[Let us sit down for a moment until this qualmishness, which these associations and some infectious quality of the atmosphere seem to produce, has passed away. What becomes of our steamer friends? Why are we now so apathetic about them? Why is it that we drift away from them so unconcernedly, forgetting even their names and faces? Why, when we do remember them, do we look at them so suspiciously, with an undefined idea that, in the unrestrained freedom of the voyage, they became possessed of some confidence and knowledge of our weaknesses that we never should have imparted? Did we make any such confessions? Perish the thought. The popular man, however, is not now so popular. We have heard finer voices than that of the young lady who sang so sweetly. Our chum's fascinating qualities, somehow, have deteriorated on land; so have those of the fair young novel-reader, now the wife of an honest miner in Virginia City.]

— The passenger who made so many trips, and exhibited a reckless familiarity with the officers;

the officers themselves, now so modest and undemonstrative, a few hours later so all-powerful and important, — these are among the reminiscences of most Californians, and these are to be remembered among the experiences of our friend. Yet he feels, as we all do, that his past experience will be of profit to him, and has already the confident air of an old voyager.

As you stand on the wharf again, and listen to the cries of itinerant fruit venders, you wonder why it is that grief at parting and the unpleasant novelties of travel are supposed to be assuaged by oranges and apples, even at ruinously low prices. Perhaps it may be, figuratively, the last offering of the fruitful earth, as the passenger commits himself to the bosom of the sterile and unproductive ocean. Even while the wheels are moving and the lines are cast off, some hardy apple merchant, mounted on the top of a pile, concludes a trade with a steerage passenger, — twenty feet interposing between buyer and seller, — and achieves, under these difficulties, the delivery of his wares. Handkerchiefs wave, hurried orders mingle with parting blessings, and the steamer is "off." As you turn your face cityward, and glance hurriedly around at the retreating crowd, you will see a reflection of your own wistful face in theirs, and read the solution of one of the problems which perplex the California enthusiast. Before you lies

San Francisco, with her hard angular outlines, her brisk, invigorating breezes, her bright, but unsympathetic sunshine, her restless and energetic population; behind you fades the recollection of changeful, but honest skies; of extremes of heat and cold, modified and made enjoyable through social and physical laws, of pastoral landscapes, of accessible Nature in her kindliest forms, of inherited virtues, of long-tested customs and habits, of old friends and old faces, — in a word — of HOME!

NEIGHBORHOODS I HAVE MOVED FROM.

I.

A BAY-WINDOW once settled the choice of my house and compensated for many of its inconveniences. When the chimney smoked, or the doors alternately shrunk and swelled, resisting any forcible attempt to open them, or opening of themselves with ghostly deliberation, or when suspicious blotches appeared on the ceiling in rainy weather, there was always the bay-window to turn to for comfort. And the view was a fine one. Alcatraz, Lime Point, Fort Point, and Saucelito were plainly visible over a restless expanse of water that changed continually, glittering in the sunlight, darkening in rocky shadow, or sweeping in mimic waves on a miniature beach below.

Although at first the bay-window was supposed to be sacred to myself and my writing materials, in obedience to some organic law, it by and by became a general lounging-place. A rocking-chair and crochet basket one day found their way there. Then the baby invaded its recesses, fortifying himself behind intrenchments of colored worsteds and spools of cotton, from which he was only dislodged

by concerted assault, and carried lamenting into captivity. A subtle glamour crept over all who came within its influence. To apply one's self to serious work there was an absurdity. An incoming ship, a gleam on the water, a cloud lingering about Tamalpais, were enough to distract the attention. Reading or writing, the bay-window was always showing something to be looked at. Unfortunately, these views were not always pleasant, but the window gave equal prominence and importance to all, without respect to quality.

The landscape in the vicinity was unimproved, but not rural. The adjacent lots had apparently just given up bearing scrub-oaks, but had not seriously taken to bricks and mortar. In one direction the vista was closed by the Home of the Inebriates, not in itself a cheerful-looking building, and, as the apparent terminus of a ramble in a certain direction, having all the effect of a moral lesson. To a certain extent, however, this building was an imposition. The enthusiastic members of my family, who confidently expected to see its inmates hilariously disporting themselves at its windows in the different stages of inebriation portrayed by the late W. E. Burton, were much disappointed. The Home was reticent of its secrets. The County Hospital, also in range of the bay-window, showed much more animation. At certain hours of the day convalescents passed in

review before the window on their way to an airing. This spectacle was the still more depressing from a singular lack of sociability that appeared to prevail among them. Each man was encompassed by the impenetrable atmosphere of his own peculiar suffering. They did not talk or walk together. From the window I have seen half a dozen sunning themselves against a wall within a few feet of each other, to all appearance utterly oblivious of the fact. Had they but quarrelled or fought, — anything would have been better than this horrible apathy.

The lower end of the street on which the bay-window was situate, opened invitingly from a popular thoroughfare; and after beckoning the unwary stranger into its recesses, ended unexpectedly at a frightful precipice. On Sundays, when the travel North-Beachwards was considerable, the bay-window delighted in the spectacle afforded by unhappy pedestrians who were seduced into taking this street as a short-cut somewhere else. It was amusing to notice how these people invariably, on coming to the precipice, glanced upward to the bay-window and endeavored to assume a careless air before they retraced their steps, whistling ostentatiously, as if they had previously known all about it. One high-spirited young man in particular, being incited thereto by a pair of mischievous bright eyes in an opposite window,

actually descended this fearful precipice rather than return, to the great peril of life and limb, and manifest injury to his Sunday clothes.

Dogs, goats, and horses constituted the *fauna* of our neighborhood. Possessing the lawless freedom of their normal condition, they still evinced a tender attachment to man and his habitations. Spirited steeds got up *extempore* races on the sidewalks, turning the street into a miniature *Corso;* dogs wrangled in the areas; while from the hill beside the house a goat browsed peacefully upon my wife's geraniums in the flower-pots of the second-story window. "We had a fine hail-storm last night," remarked a newly arrived neighbor, who had just moved into the adjoining house. It would have been a pity to set him right, as he was quite enthusiastic about the view and the general sanitary qualifications of the locality. So I did n't tell him anything about the goats who were in the habit of using his house as a stepping-stone to the adjoining hill.

But the locality was remarkably healthy. People who fell down the embankments found their wounds heal rapidly in the steady sea-breeze. Ventilation was complete and thorough. The opening of the bay-window produced a current of wholesome air which effectually removed all noxious exhalations, together with the curtains, the hinges of the back door, and the window-shutters. Owing to this

peculiarity, some of my writings acquired an extensive circulation and publicity in the neighborhood, which years in another locality might not have produced. Several articles of wearing apparel, which were mysteriously transposed from our clothes-line to that of an humble though honest neighbor, was undoubtedly the result of these sanitary winds. Yet in spite of these advantages I found it convenient in a few months to move. And the result whereof I shall communicate in other papers.

II.

"A HOUSE with a fine garden and extensive shrubbery, in a genteel neighborhood," were, if I remember rightly, the general terms of an advertisement which once decided my choice of a dwelling. I should add that this occurred at an early stage of my household experience, when I placed a trustful reliance in advertisements. I have since learned that the most truthful people are apt to indulge a slight vein of exaggeration in describing their own possessions, as though the mere circumstance of going into print were an excuse for a certain kind of mendacity. But I did not fully awaken to this fact until a much later period, when, in answering an advertisement which described a highly advantageous tenement, I was

referred to the house I then occupied, and from which a thousand inconveniences were impelling me to move.

The "fine garden" alluded to was not large, but contained several peculiarly shaped flower-beds. I was at first struck with the singular resemblance which they bore to the mutton-chops that are usually brought on the table at hotels and restaurants, — a resemblance the more striking from the sprigs of parsley which they produced freely. One plat in particular reminded me, not unpleasantly, of a peculiar cake, known to my boyhood as "a bolivar." The owner of the property, however, who seemed to be a man of original æsthetic ideas, had banked up one of these beds with bright-colored sea-shells, so that in rainy weather it suggested an aquarium, and offered the elements of botanical and conchological study in pleasing juxtaposition. I have since thought that the fish-geraniums, which it also bore to a surprising extent, were introduced originally from some such idea of consistency. But it was very pleasant, after dinner, to ramble up and down the gravelly paths (whose occasional boulders reminded me of the dry bed of a somewhat circuitous mining stream), smoking a cigar, or inhaling the rich aroma of fennel, or occasionally stopping to pluck one of the hollyhocks with which the garden abounded. The prolific qualities of this plant

alarmed us greatly, for although, in the first transport of enthusiasm, my wife planted several different kinds of flower-seeds, nothing ever came up but hollyhocks; and although, impelled by the same laudable impulse, I procured a copy of "Downing's Landscape Gardening," and a few gardening tools, and worked for several hours in the garden, my efforts were equally futile.

The "extensive shrubbery" consisted of several dwarfed trees. One was a very weak young weeping willow, so very limp and maudlin, and so evidently bent on establishing its reputation, that it had to be tied up against the house for support. The dampness of that portion of the house was usually attributed to the presence of this lachrymose shrub. And to these a couple of highly objectionable trees, known, I think, by the name of *Malva*, which made an inordinate show of cheap blossoms that they were continually shedding, and one or two dwarf oaks, with scaly leaves and a generally spiteful exterior, and you have what was not inaptly termed by our Milesian handmaid "the scrubbery."

The gentility of our neighbor suffered a blight from the unwholesome vicinity of McGinnis Court. This court was a kind of *cul de sac* that, on being penetrated, discovered a primitive people living in a state of barbarous freedom, and apparently spending the greater portion of their lives on their own

door-steps. Many of those details of the toilet which a popular prejudice restricts to the dressing-room in other localities, were here performed in the open court without fear and without reproach. Early in the week the court was hid in a choking, soapy mist, which arose from innumerable wash-tubs. This was followed in a day or two later by an extraordinary exhibition of wearing apparel of divers colors, fluttering on lines like a display of bunting on ship-board, and whose flapping in the breeze was like irregular discharges of musketry. It was evident also that the court exercised a demoralizing influence over the whole neighborhood. A sanguine property-owner once put up a handsome dwelling on the corner of our street, and lived therein; but although he appeared frequently on his balcony, clad in a bright crimson dressing-gown, which made him look like a tropical bird of some rare and gorgeous species, he failed to woo any kindred dressing-gown to the vicinity, and only provoked opprobrious epithets from the *gamins* of the court. He moved away shortly after, and on going by the house one day, I noticed a bill of "Rooms to let, with board," posted conspicuously on the Corinthian columns of the porch. McGinnis Court had triumphed. An interchange of civilities at once took place between the court and the servants' area of the palatial mansion, and some of the young men boarders exchange playful slang

with the adolescent members of the court. From that moment we felt that our claims to gentility were forever abandoned.

Yet, we enjoyed intervals of unalloyed contentment. When the twilight toned down the hard outlines of the oaks, and made shadowy clumps and formless masses of other bushes, it was quite romantic to sit by the window and inhale the faint, sad odor of the fennel in the walks below. Perhaps this economical pleasure was much enhanced by a picture in my memory, whose faded colors the odor of this humble plant never failed to restore. So I often sat there of evenings and closed my eyes until the forms and benches of a country schoolroom came back to me, redolent with the incense of fennel covertly stowed away in my desk, and gazed again in silent rapture on the round, red cheeks and long black braids of that peerless creature whose glance had often caused my cheeks to glow over the preternatural collar, which at that period of my boyhood it was my pride and privilege to wear. As I fear I may be often thought hypercritical and censorious in these articles, I am willing to record this as one of the advantages of our new house, not mentioned in the advertisement, nor chargeable in the rent. May the present tenant, who is a stock-broker, and who impresses me with the idea of having always been called "Mr." from his cradle up, enjoy this advantage, and try sometimes to remember he was a boy!

III.

Soon after I moved into Happy Valley I was struck with the remarkable infelicity of its title. Generous as Californians are in the use of adjectives, this passed into the domain of irony. But I was inclined to think it sincere, — the production of a weak but gushing mind, just as the feminine nomenclature of streets in the vicinity was evidently bestowed by one in habitual communion with "Friendship's Gifts" and "Affection's Offerings."

Our house on Laura Matilda Street looked somewhat like a toy Swiss Cottage, — a style of architecture so prevalent, that in walking down the block it was quite difficult to resist an impression of fresh glue and pine shavings. The few shade-trees might have belonged originally to those oval Christmas boxes which contain toy villages; and even the people who sat by the windows had a stiffness that made them appear surprisingly unreal and artificial. A little dog belonging to a neighbor was known to the members of my household by the name of "Glass," from the general suggestion he gave of having been spun of that article. Perhaps I have somewhat exaggerated these illustrations of the dapper nicety of our neighborhood, — a neatness and conciseness which I think have a general tendency to belittle, dwarf, and contract

their objects. For we gradually fell into small ways and narrow ideas, and to some extent squared the round world outside to the correct angles of Laura Matilda Street.

One reason for this insincere quality may have been the fact that the very foundations of our neighborhood were artificial. Laura Matilda Street was "made ground." The land, not yet quite reclaimed, was continually struggling with its old enemy. We had not been long in our new home before we found an older tenant, not yet wholly divested of his rights, who sometimes showed himself in clammy perspiration on the basement walls, whose damp breath chilled our dining-room, and in the night struck a mortal chilliness through the house. There were no patent fastenings that could keep him out, — no writ of unlawful detainer that could eject him. In the winter his presence was quite palpable; he sapped the roots of the trees, he gurgled under the kitchen floor, he wrought an unwholesome greenness on the side of the veranda. In summer he became invisible, but still exercised a familiar influence over the locality. He planted little stitches in the small of the back, sought out old aches and weak joints, and sportively punched the tenants of the Swiss Cottage under the ribs. He inveigled little children to play with him, but his plays generally ended in scarlet fever, diphtheria, whooping-cough, and mea-

sles. He sometimes followed strong men about until they sickened suddenly and took to their beds. But he kept the green-plants in good order, and was very fond of verdure, bestowing it even upon lath and plaster and soulless stone. He was generally invisible, as I have said; but some time after I had moved, I saw him one morning from the hill stretching his gray wings over the valley, like some fabulous vampire, who had spent the night sucking the wholesome juices of the sleepers below, and was sluggish from the effects of his repast. It was then that I recognized him as Malaria, and knew his abode to be the dread Valley of the shadow of Miasma, — miscalled the Happy Valley!

On week days there was a pleasant melody of boiler-making from the foundries, and the gas works in the vicinity sometimes lent a mild perfume to the breeze. Our street was usually quiet, however, — a footfall being sufficient to draw the inhabitants to their front windows, and to oblige an incautious trespasser to run the gauntlet of batteries of blue and black eyes on either side of the way. A carriage passing through it communicated a singular thrill to the floors, and caused the china on the dining-table to rattle. Although we were comparatively free from the prevailing winds, wandering gusts sometimes got bewildered and strayed unconsciously into our street, and finding an unencumbered field, incontinently set up a

shriek of joy, and went gleefully to work on the clothes-lines and chimney-pots, and had a good time generally until they were quite exhausted. I have a very vivid picture in my memory of an organ-grinder who was at one time blown into the end of our street, and actually blown through it in spite of several ineffectual efforts to come to a stand before the different dwellings, but who was finally whirled out of the other extremity, still playing and vainly endeavoring to pursue his unhallowed calling. But these were noteworthy exceptions to the calm and even tenor of our life.

There was contiguity but not much sociability in our neighborhood. From my bedroom window I could plainly distinguish the peculiar kind of victuals spread on my neighbor's dining-table; while, on the other hand, he obtained an equally uninterrupted view of the mysteries of my toilet. Still, that "low vice, curiosity," was regulated by certain laws, and a kind of rude chivalry invested our observation. A pretty girl, whose bedroom window was the cynosure of neighboring eyes, was once brought under the focus of an opera-glass in the hands of one of our ingenuous youth; but this act met such prompt and universal condemnation, as an unmanly advantage, from the lips of married men and bachelors who did n't own opera-glasses, that it was never repeated.

With this brief sketch I conclude my record of

the neighborhoods I have moved from. I have moved from many others since then, but they have generally presented features not dissimilar to the three I have endeavored to describe in these pages. I offer them as types containing the salient peculiarities of all. Let no inconsiderate reader rashly move on account of them. My experience has not been cheaply bought. From the nettle Change I have tried to pluck the flower Security. Draymen have grown rich at my expense. House-agents have known me and were glad, and landlords have risen up to meet me from afar. The force of habit impels me still to consult all the bills I see in the streets, nor can the war telegrams divert my first attention from the advertising columns of the daily papers. I repeat, let no man think I have disclosed the weaknesses of the neighborhood, nor rashly open that closet which contains the secret skeleton of his dwelling. My carpets have been altered to fit all sized odd-shaped apartments from parallelopiped to hexagons. Much of my furniture has been distributed among my former dwellings. These limbs have stretched upon uncarpeted floors, or have been let down suddenly from imperfectly established bedsteads. I have dined in the parlor and slept in the back kitchen. Yet the result of these sacrifices and trials may be briefly summed up in the statement that I am now on the eve of removal from my PRESENT NEIGHBORHOOD.

MY SUBURBAN RESIDENCE.

I LIVE in the suburbs. My residence, to quote the pleasing fiction of the advertisement, "is within fifteen minutes' walk of the City Hall." Why the City Hall should be considered as an eligible terminus of anybody's walk, under any circumstances, I have not been able to determine. Never having walked from my residence to that place, I am unable to verify the assertion, though I may state as a purely abstract and separate proposition, that it takes me the better part of an hour to reach Montgomery Street.

My selection of locality was a compromise between my wife's desire to go into the country, and my own predilections for civic habitation. Like most compromises, it ended in retaining the objectionable features of both propositions; I procured the inconveniences of the country without losing the discomforts of the city. I increased my distance from the butcher and green-grocer, without approximating to herds and kitchen-gardens. But I anticipate.

Fresh air was to be the principal thing sought for. That there might be too much of this did

not enter into my calculations. The first day I entered my residence, it blew; the second day was windy; the third, fresh, with a strong breeze stirring; on the fourth, it blew; on the fifth, there was a gale, which has continued to the present writing.

That the air is fresh, the above statement sufficiently establishes. That it is bracing, I argue from the fact that I find it impossible to open the shutters on the windward side of the house. That it is healthy, I am also convinced, believing that there is no other force in Nature that could so buffet and ill-use a person without serious injury to him. Let me offer an instance. The path to my door crosses a slight eminence. The unconscious visitor, a little exhausted by the ascent and the general effects of the gentle gales which he has faced in approaching my hospitable mansion, relaxes his efforts, smooths his brow, and approaches with a fascinating smile. Rash and too confident man! The wind delivers a succession of rapid blows, and he is thrown back. He staggers up again, in the language of the P. R., "smiling and confident." The wind now makes for a vulnerable point, and gets his hat in chancery. All ceremony is now thrown away; the luckless wretch seizes his hat with both hands, and charges madly at the front door. Inch by inch, the wind contests the ground; another struggle, and he stands

upon the veranda. On such occasions I make it a point to open the door myself, with a calmness and serenity that shall offer a marked contrast to his feverish and excited air, and shall throw suspicion of inebriety upon him. If he be inclined to timidity and bashfulness, during the best of the evening he is all too conscious of the disarrangement of his hair and cravat. If he is less sensitive, the result is often more distressing. A valued elderly friend once called upon me after undergoing a twofold struggle with the wind and a large Newfoundland dog (which I keep for reasons hereinafter stated), and not only his hat, but his wig, had suffered. He spent the evening with me, totally unconscious of the fact that his hair presented the singular spectacle of having been parted diagonally from the right temple to the left ear. When ladies called, my wife preferred to receive them. They were generally hysterical, and often in tears. I remember, one Sunday, to have been startled by what appeared to be the balloon from Hayes Valley drifting rapidly past my conservatory, closely followed by the Newfoundland dog. I rushed to the front door, but was anticipated by my wife. A strange lady appeared at lunch, but the phenomenon remained otherwise unaccounted for. Egress from my residence is much more easy. My guests seldom "stand upon the order of their going, but go at once"; the Newfoundland dog

playfully harassing their rear. I was standing one day, with my hand on the open hall door, in serious conversation with the minister of the parish, when the back door was cautiously opened. The watchful breeze seized the opportunity, and charged through the defenceless passage. The front door closed violently in the middle of a sentence, precipitating the reverend gentleman into the garden. The Newfoundland dog, with that sagacity for which his race is so distinguished, at once concluded that a personal collision had taken place between myself and visitor, and flew to my defence. The reverend gentleman never called again.

The Newfoundland dog above alluded to was part of a system of protection which my suburban home once required. Robberies were frequent in the neighborhood, and my only fowl fell a victim to the spoiler's art. One night I awoke, and found a man in my room. With singular delicacy and respect for the feelings of others, he had been careful not to awaken any of the sleepers, and retired upon my rising, without waiting for any suggestion. Touched by his delicacy, I forbore giving the alarm until after he had made good his retreat. I then wanted to go after a policeman, but my wife remonstrated, as this would leave the house exposed. Remembering the gentlemanly conduct of the burglar, I suggested the plan of following him and requesting him to give the alarm as he went in

town. But this proposition was received with equal disfavor. The next day I procured a dog and a revolver. The former went off, but the latter would n't. I then got a new dog and chained him, and a duelling pistol, with a hair-trigger. The result was so far satisfactory that neither could be approached with safety, and for some time I left them out, indifferently, during the night. But the chain one day gave way, and the dog, evidently having no other attachment to the house, took the opportunity to leave. His place was soon filled by the Newfoundland, whose fidelity and sagacity I have just recorded.

Space is one of the desirable features of my suburban residence. I do not know the number of acres the grounds contain except from the inordinate quantity of hose required for irrigating. I perform daily, like some gentle shepherd, upon a quarter-inch pipe without any visible result, and have had serious thoughts of contracting with some disbanded fire company for their hose and equipments. It is quite a walk to the wood-house. Every day some new feature of the grounds is discovered. My youngest boy was one day missing for several hours. His head — a peculiarly venerable and striking object — was at last discovered just above the grass at some distance from the house. On examination he was found comfortably seated in a disused drain, in company with a silver spoon and

a dead rat. On being removed from this locality he howled dismally and refused to be comforted.

The view from my suburban residence is fine. Lone Mountain, with its white obelisks, is a suggestive if not cheering termination of the vista in one direction, while the old receiving vault of Yerba Buena Cemetery limits the view in another. Most of the funerals which take place pass my house. My children, with the charming imitativeness that belongs to youth, have caught the spirit of these passing corteges, and reproduce in the back yard, with creditable skill, the salient features of the lugubrious procession. A doll, from whose features all traces of vitality and expression have been removed, represents the deceased. Yet unfortunately I have been obliged to promise them more active participation in this ceremony at some future time, and I fear that they look anxiously forward with the glowing impatience of youth to the speedy removal of some one of my circle of friends. I am told that the eldest, with the unsophisticated frankness that belongs to his age, made a personal request to that effect to one of my acquaintances One singular result of the frequency of these funerals is the development of a critical and fastidious taste in such matters on the part of myself and family. If I may so express myself, without irreverence, we seldom turn out for anything less than six carriages. Any number over this is

usually breathlessly announced by Bridget as, "Here 's another, mum, — and a good long one."

With these slight drawbacks my suburban residence is charming. To the serious poet, and writer of elegiac verses, the aspect of Nature, viewed from my veranda, is suggestive. I myself have experienced moments when the "sad mechanic exercise" of verse would have been of infinite relief. The following stanzas, by a young friend who has been stopping with me for the benefit of his health, addressed to a duck that frequented a small pond in the vicinity of my mansion, may be worthy of perusal. I think I have met the idea conveyed in the first verse in some of Hood's prose, but as my friend assures me that Hood was too conscientious to appropriate anything not his own, I conclude I am mistaken.

LINES TO A WATER-FOWL.

(Intra Muros.)

I.

Fowl, that sing'st in yonder pool,
Where the summer winds blow cool,
Are there hydropathic cures
For the ills that man endures?
Know'st thou Priessnitz? What? alack
Hast no other word but "Quack?"

II.

Cleopatra's barge might pale
To the splendors of thy tail,
Or the stately caravel
Of some "high-pooped admiral."
Never yet left such a wake
E'en the navigator Drake!

III.

Dux thou art, and leader, too,
Heeding not what 's "falling due,"
Knowing not of debt or dun, —
Thou dost heed no bill but one;
And, though scarce conceivable,
That 's a bill Receivable,
Made — that thou thy stars mightst thank —
Payable at the next bank.

ON A VULGAR LITTLE BOY.

THE subject of this article is at present leaning against a tree directly opposite to my window. He wears his cap with the wrong side before, apparently for no other object than that which seems the most obvious,— of showing more than the average quantity of very dirty face. His clothes, which are worn with a certain buttonless ease and freedom, display, in the different quality of their fruit-stains, a pleasing indication of the progress of the seasons. The nose of this vulgar little boy turns up at the end. I have noticed this in several other vulgar little boys, although it is by no means improbable that youthful vulgarity may be present without this facial peculiarity. Indeed, I am inclined to the belief that it is rather the result of early inquisitiveness — of furtive pressures against window-panes, and of looking over fences, or of the habit of biting large apples hastily — than an indication of scorn or juvenile superciliousness. The vulgar little boy is more remarkable for his obtrusive familiarity. It is my experience of his predisposition to this quality which has induced me to write this article.

My acquaintance with him began in a moment of weakness. I have an unfortunate predilection to cultivate originality in people, even when accompanied by objectionable character. But, as I lack the firmness and skilfulness which usually accompany this taste in others, and enable them to drop acquaintances when troublesome, I have surrounded myself with divers unprofitable friends, among whom I count the vulgar little boy. The manner in which he first attracted my attention was purely accidental. He was playing in the street, and the driver of a passing vehicle cut at him, sportively, with his whip. The vulgar little boy rose to his feet and hurled after his tormentor a single sentence of invective. I refrain from repeating it, for I feel that I could not do justice to it here. If I remember rightly, it conveyed, in a very few words, a reflection on the legitimacy of the driver's birth; it hinted a suspicion of his father's integrity, and impugned the fair fame of his mother; it suggested incompetency in his present position, personal uncleanliness, and evinced a sceptical doubt of his future salvation. As his youthful lips closed over the last syllable, the eyes of the vulgar little boy met mine. Something in my look emboldened him to wink. I did not repel the action nor the complicity it implied. From that moment I fell into the power of the vulgar little boy, and he has never left me since.

He haunts me in the streets and by-ways. He accosts me, when in the company of friends, with repulsive freedom. He lingers about the gate of my dwelling to waylay me as I issue forth to business. Distance he overcomes by main strength of lungs, and he hails me from the next street. He met me at the theatre the other evening, and demanded my check with the air of a young foot-pad. I foolishly gave it to him, but re-entering some time after, and comfortably seating myself in the parquet, I was electrified by hearing my name called from the gallery with the addition of a playful adjective. It was the vulgar little boy. During the performance he projected spirally-twisted playbills in my direction, and indulged in a running commentary on the supernumeraries as they entered.

To-day has evidently been a dull one with him. I observe he whistles the popular airs of the period with less shrillness and intensity. Providence, however, looks not unkindly on him, and delivers into his hands as it were two nice little boys who have at this moment innocently strayed into our street. They are pink and white children, and are dressed alike, and exhibit a certain air of neatness and refinement which is alone sufficient to awaken the antagonism of the vulgar little boy. A sigh of satisfaction breaks from his breast. What does he do? Any other boy would content himself

with simply knocking the hats off their respective heads, and so vent his superfluous vitality in a single act, besides precipitating the flight of the enemy. But there are æsthetic considerations not to be overlooked; insult is to be added to the injury inflicted, and in the struggles of the victim some justification is to be sought for extreme measures. The two nice little boys perceive their danger and draw closer to each other. The vulgar little boy begins by irony. He affects to be overpowered by the magnificence of their costume. He addresses me (across the street and through the closed window), and requests information if there haply be a circus in the vicinity. He makes affectionate inquiries after the health of their parents. He expresses a fear of maternal anxiety in regard to their welfare. He offers to conduct them home. One nice little boy feebly retorts; but alas! his correct pronunciation, his grammatical exactitude, and his moderate epithets only provoke a scream of derision from the vulgar little boy, who now rapidly changes his tactics. Staggering under the weight of his vituperation, they fall easy victims to what he would call his "dexter mawley." A wail of lamentation goes up from our street. But as the subject of this article seems to require a more vigorous handling than I had purposed to give it, I find it necessary to abandon my present dignified position, seize my hat, open the front door, and try a stronger method.

WAITING FOR THE SHIP.

A FORT POINT IDYL.

ABOUT an hour's ride from the Plaza there is a high bluff with the ocean breaking uninterruptedly along its rocky beach. There are several cottages on the sands, which look as if they had recently been cast up by a heavy sea. The cultivated patch behind each tenement is fenced in by bamboos, broken spars, and driftwood. With its few green cabbages and turnip-tops, each garden looks something like an aquarium with the water turned off. In fact you would not be surprised to meet a merman digging among the potatoes, or a mermaid milking a sea cow hard by.

Near this place formerly arose a great semaphoric telegraph with its gaunt arms tossed up against the horizon. It has been replaced by an observatory, connected with an electric nerve to the heart of the great commercial city. From this point the incoming ships are signalled, and again checked off at the City Exchange. And while we are here looking for the expected steamer, let me tell you a story.

Not long ago, a simple, hard-working mechanic

had amassed sufficient by diligent labor in the mines to send home for his wife and two children. He arrived in San Francisco a month before the time the ship was due, for he was a western man, and had made the overland journey and knew little of ships or seas or gales. He procured work in the city, but as the time approached he would go to the shipping office regularly every day. The month passed, but the ship came not; then a month and a week, two weeks, three weeks, two months, and then a year.

The rough, patient face, with soft lines overlying its hard features, which had become a daily apparition at the shipping agent's, then disappeared. It turned up one afternoon at the observatory as the setting sun relieved the operator from his duties. There was something so childlike and simple in the few questions asked by this stranger, touching his business, that the operator spent some time to explain. When the mystery of signals and telegraphs was unfolded, the stranger had one more question to ask. "How long might a vessel be absent before they would give up expecting her?" The operator could n't tell; it would depend on circumstances. Would it be a year? Yes, it might be a year, and vessels had been given up for lost after two years and had come home. The stranger put his rough hand on the operator's, and thanked him for his "troubil," and went away.

Still the ship came not. Stately clippers swept into the Gate, and merchantmen went by with colors flying, and the welcoming gun of the steamer often reverberated among the hills. Then the patient face, with the old resigned expression, but a brighter, wistful look in the eye, was regularly met on the crowded decks of the steamer as she disembarked her living freight. He may have had a dimly defined hope that the missing ones might yet come this way, as only another road over that strange unknown expanse. But he talked with ship captains and sailors, and even this last hope seemed to fail. When the careworn face and bright eyes were presented again at the observatory, the operator, busily engaged, could not spare time to answer foolish interrogatories, so he went away. But as night fell, he was seen sitting on the rocks with his face turned seaward, and was seated there all that night.

When he became hopelessly insane, for that was what the physicians said made his eyes so bright and wistful, he was cared for by a fellow-craftsman who had known his troubles. He was allowed to indulge his fancy of going out to watch for the ship, in which she "and the children" were, at night when no one else was watching. He had made up his mind that the ship would come in at night. This, and the idea that he would relieve the operator, who would be tired with watching all

day, seemed to please him. So he went out and relieved the operator every night!

For two years the ships came and went. He was there to see the outward-bound clipper, and greet her on her return. He was known only by a few who frequented the place. When he was missed at last from his accustomed spot, a day or two elapsed before any alarm was felt. One Sunday, a party of pleasure-seekers clambering over the rocks were attracted by the barking of a dog that had run on before them. When they came up they found a plainly dressed man lying there dead. There were a few papers in his pocket, — chiefly slips cut from different journals of old marine memoranda, — and his face was turned towards the distant sea.

LEGENDS AND TALES.

THE LEGEND OF MONTE DEL DIABLO.

THE cautious reader will detect a lack of authenticity in the following pages. I am not a cautious reader myself, yet I confess with some concern to the absence of much documentary evidence in support of the singular incident I am about to relate. Disjointed memoranda, the proceedings of *ayuntamientos* and early departmental *juntas*, with other records of a primitive and superstitious people, have been my inadequate authorities. It is but just to state, however, that though this particular story lacks corroboration, in ransacking the Spanish archives of Upper California I have met with many more surprising and incredible stories, attested and supported to a degree that would have placed this legend beyond a cavil or doubt. I have, also, never lost faith in the legend myself, and in so doing have profited much from the examples of divers grant-claimants, who have often jostled me in their more practical researches, and who have my sincere sympathy at the scepticism of a modern hard-headed and practical world.

For many years after Father Junipero Serro first

rang his bell in the wilderness of Upper California, the spirit which animated that adventurous priest did not wane. The conversion of the heathen went on rapidly in the establishment of Missions throughout the land. So sedulously did the good Fathers set about their work, that around their isolated chapels there presently arose *adobe* huts, whose mud-plastered and savage tenants partook regularly of the provisions, and occasionally of the Sacrament, of their pious hosts. Nay, so great was their progress, that one zealous Padre is reported to have administered the Lord's Supper one Sabbath morning to "over three hundred heathen Salvages." It was not to be wondered that the Enemy of Souls, being greatly incensed thereat, and alarmed at his decreasing popularity, should have grievously tempted and embarrassed these Holy Fathers, as we shall presently see.

Yet they were happy, peaceful days for California. The vagrant keels of prying Commerce had not as yet ruffled the lordly gravity of her bays. No torn and ragged gulch betrayed the suspicion of golden treasure. The wild oats drooped idly in the morning heat, or wrestled with the afternoon breezes. Deer and antelope dotted the plain. The watercourses brawled in their familiar channels, nor dreamed of ever shifting their regular tide. The wonders of the Yosemite and Calaveras were as yet unrecorded. The Holy Fathers noted

little of the landscape beyond the barbaric prodigality with which the quick soil repaid the sowing. A new conversion, the advent of a Saint's day, or the baptism of an Indian baby, was at once the chronicle and marvel of their day.

At this blissful epoch there lived at the Mission of San Pablo Father José Antonio Haro, a worthy brother of the Society of Jesus. He was of tall and cadaverous aspect. A somewhat romantic history had given a poetic interest to his lugubrious visage. While a youth, pursuing his studies at famous Salamanca, he had become enamored of the charms of Doña Cármen de Torrencevara, as that lady passed to her matutinal devotions. Untoward circumstances, hastened, perhaps, by a wealthier suitor, brought this amour to a disastrous issue; and Father José entered a monastery, taking upon himself the vows of celibacy. It was here that his natural fervor and poetic enthusiasm conceived expression as a missionary. A longing to convert the uncivilized heathen succeeded his frivolous earthly passion, and a desire to explore and develop unknown fastnesses continually possessed him. In his flashing eye and sombre exterior was detected a singular commingling of the discreet Las Casas and the impetuous Balboa.

Fired by this pious zeal, Father José went forward in the van of Christian pioneers. On reaching Mexico, he obtained authority to establish the

Mission of San Pablo. Like the good Junipero, accompanied only by an acolyte and muleteer, he unsaddled his mules in a dusky *cañon*, and rang his bell in the wilderness. The savages — a peaceful, inoffensive, and inferior race — presently flocked around him. The nearest military post was far away, which contributed much to the security of these pious pilgrims, who found their open trustfulness and amiability better fitted to repress hostility than the presence of an armed, suspicious, and brawling soldiery. So the good Father José said matins and prime, mass and vespers, in the heart of Sin and Heathenism, taking no heed to himself, but looking only to the welfare of the Holy Church. Conversions soon followed, and, on the 7th of July, 1760, the first Indian baby was baptized,—an event which, as Father José piously records, "exceeds the richnesse of gold or precious jewels or the chancing upon the Ophir of Solomon." I quote this incident as best suited to show the ingenious blending of poetry and piety which distinguished Father José's record.

The Mission of San Pablo progressed and prospered until the pious founder thereof, like the infidel Alexander, might have wept that there were no more heathen worlds to conquer. But his ardent and enthusiastic spirit could not long brook an idleness that seemed begotten of sin; and one pleasant August morning, in the year of grace

1770, Father José issued from the outer court of the Mission building, equipped to explore the field for new missionary labors.

Nothing could exceed the quiet gravity and unpretentiousness of the little cavalcade. First rode a stout muleteer, leading a pack-mule laden with the provisions of the party, together with a few cheap crucifixes and hawks' bells. After him came the devout Padre José, bearing his breviary and cross, with a black *serapa* thrown around his shoulders; while on either side trotted a dusky convert, anxious to show a proper sense of their regeneration by acting as guides into the wilds of their heathen brethren. Their new condition was agreeably shown by the absence of the usual mud-plaster, which in their unconverted state they assumed to keep away vermin and cold. The morning was bright and propitious. Before their departure, mass had been said in the chapel, and the protection of St. Ignatius invoked against all contingent evils, but especially against bears, which, like the fiery dragons of old, seemed to cherish unconquerable hostility to the Holy Church.

As they wound through the *cañon*, charming birds disported upon boughs and sprays, and sober quails piped from the alders; the willowy water-courses gave a musical utterance, and the long grass whispered on the hillside. On entering the deeper defiles, above them towered dark green

masses of pine, and occasionally the *madroño* shook its bright scarlet berries. As they toiled up many a steep ascent, Father José sometimes picked up fragments of scoria, which spake to his imagination of direful volcanoes and impending earthquakes. To the less scientific mind of the muleteer Ignacio they had even a more terrifying significance; and he once or twice snuffed the air suspiciously, and declared that it smelt of sulphur. So the first day of their journey wore away, and at night they encamped without having met a single heathen face.

It was on this night that the Enemy of Souls appeared to Ignacio in an appalling form. He had retired to a secluded part of the camp and had sunk upon his knees in prayerful meditation, when he looked up and perceived the Arch-Fiend in the likeness of a monstrous bear. The Evil One was seated on his hind legs immediately before him, with his fore paws joined together just below his black muzzle. Wisely conceiving this remarkable attitude to be in mockery and derision of his devotions, the worthy muleteer was transported with fury. Seizing an arquebuse, he instantly closed his eyes and fired. When he had recovered from the effects of the terrific discharge, the apparition had disappeared. Father José, awakened by the report, reached the spot only in time to chide the muleteer for wasting powder and ball

in a contest with one whom a single *ave* would have been sufficient to utterly discomfit. What further reliance he placed on Ignacio's story is not known; but, in commemoration of a worthy Californian custom, the place was called *La Cañada de la Tentacion del Pio Muletero*, or "The Glen of the Temptation of the Pious Muleteer," a name which it retains to this day.

The next morning the party, issuing from a narrow gorge, came upon a long valley, sear and burnt with the shadeless heat. Its lower extremity was lost in a fading line of low hills, which, gathering might and volume toward the upper end of the valley, upheaved a stupendous bulwark against the breezy North. The peak of this awful spur was just touched by a fleecy cloud that shifted to and fro like a banneret. Father José gazed at it with mingled awe and admiration. By a singular coincidence, the muleteer Ignacio uttered the simple ejaculation "*Diablo!*"

As they penetrated the valley, they soon began to miss the agreeable life and companionable echoes of the *cañon* they had quitted. Huge fissures in the parched soil seemed to gape as with thirsty mouths. A few squirrels darted from the earth, and disappeared as mysteriously before the jingling mules. A gray wolf trotted leisurely along just ahead. But whichever way Father José turned, the mountain always asserted itself and

arrested his wandering eye. Out of the dry and arid valley, it seemed to spring into cooler and bracing life. Deep cavernous shadows dwelt along its base; rocky fastnesses appeared midway of its elevation; and on either side huge black hills diverged like massy roots from a central trunk. His lively fancy pictured these hills peopled with a majestic and intelligent race of savages; and looking into futurity, he already saw a monstrous cross crowning the dome-like summit. Far different were the sensations of the muleteer, who saw in those awful solitudes only fiery dragons, colossal bears and break-neck trails. The converts, Concepcion and Incarnacion, trotting modestly beside the Padre, recognized, perhaps, some manifestation of their former weird mythology.

At nightfall they reached the base of the mountain. Here Father José unpacked his mules, said vespers, and, formally ringing his bell, called upon the Gentiles within hearing to come and accept the Holy Faith. The echoes of the black frowning hills around him caught up the pious invitation, and repeated it at intervals; but no Gentiles appeared that night. Nor were the devotions of the muleteer again disturbed, although he afterward asserted, that, when the Father's exhortation was ended, a mocking peal of laughter came from the mountain. Nothing daunted by these intimations of the near hostility of the Evil One, Father José

declared his intention to ascend the mountain at early dawn; and before the sun rose the next morning he was leading the way.

The ascent was in many places difficult and dangerous. Huge fragments of rock often lay across the trail, and after a few hours' climbing they were forced to leave their mules in a little gully, and continue the ascent afoot. Unaccustomed to such exertion, Father José often stopped to wipe the perspiration from his thin cheeks. As the day wore on, a strange silence oppressed them. Except the occasional pattering of a squirrel, or a rustling in the *chimisal* bushes, there were no signs of life. The half-human print of a bear's foot sometimes appeared before them, at which Ignacio always crossed himself piously. The eye was sometimes cheated by a dripping from the rocks, which on closer inspection proved to be a resinous oily liquid with an abominable sulphurous smell. When they were within a short distance of the summit, the discreet Ignacio, selecting a sheltered nook for the camp, slipped aside and busied himself in preparations for the evening, leaving the Holy Father to continue the ascent alone. Never was there a more thoughtless act of prudence, never a more imprudent piece of caution. Without noticing the desertion, buried in pious reflection, Father José pushed mechanically on, and, reaching the summit, cast himself down and gazed upon the prospect.

Below him lay a succession of valleys opening into each other like gentle lakes, until they were lost to the southward. Westerly the distant range hid the bosky *cañada* which sheltered the mission of San Pablo. In the farther distance the Pacific Ocean stretched away, bearing a cloud of fog upon its bosom, which crept through the entrance of the bay, and rolled thickly between him and the north-eastward; the same fog hid the base of mountain and the view beyond. Still, from time to time the fleecy veil parted, and timidly disclosed charming glimpses of mighty rivers, mountain defiles, and rolling plains, sear with ripened oats, and bathed in the glow of the setting sun. As Father José gazed, he was penetrated with a pious longing. Already his imagination, filled with enthusiastic conceptions, beheld all that vast expanse gathered under the mild sway of the Holy Faith, and peopled with zealous converts. Each little knoll in fancy became crowned with a chapel; from each dark *cañon* gleamed the white walls of a mission building. Growing bolder in his enthusiasm, and looking farther into futurity, he beheld a new Spain rising on these savage shores. He already saw the spires of stately cathedrals, the domes of palaces, vineyards, gardens, and groves. Convents, half hid among the hills, peeping from plantations of branching limes; and long processions of chanting nuns wound through the defiles. So com-

pletely was the good Father's conception of the future confounded with the past, that even in their choral strain the well-remembered accents of Cármen struck his ear. He was busied in these fanciful imaginings, when suddenly over that extended prospect the faint, distant tolling of a bell rang sadly out and died. It was the *Angelus*. Father José listened with superstitious exaltation. The mission of San Pablo was far away, and the sound must have been some miraculous omen. But never before, to his enthusiastic sense, did the sweet seriousness of this angelic symbol come with such strange significance. With the last faint peal, his glowing fancy seemed to cool; the fog closed in below him, and the good Father remembered he had not had his supper. He had risen and was wrapping his *serapa* around him, when he perceived for the first time that he was not alone.

Nearly opposite, and where should have been the faithless Ignacio, a grave and decorous figure was seated. His appearance was that of an elderly *hidalgo*, dressed in mourning, with mustaches of iron-gray carefully waxed and twisted around a pair of lantern-jaws. The monstrous hat and prodigious feather, the enormous ruff and exaggerated trunk-hose, contrasted with a frame shrivelled and wizened, all belonged to a century previous. Yet Father José was not astonished. His adventurous life and poetic imagination, continually on the

lookout for the marvellous, gave him a certain advantage over the practical and material minded. He instantly detected the diabolical quality of his visitant, and was prepared. With equal coolness and courtesy he met the cavalier's obeisance.

"I ask your pardon, Sir Priest," said the stranger, "for disturbing your meditations. Pleasant they must have been, and right fanciful, I imagine, when occasioned by so fair a prospect."

"Worldly, perhaps, Sir Devil, — for such I take you to be," said the Holy Father, as the stranger bowed his black plumes to the ground; "worldly, perhaps; for it hath pleased Heaven to retain even in our regenerated state much that pertaineth to the flesh, yet still, I trust, not without some speculation for the welfare of the Holy Church. In dwelling upon yon fair expanse, mine eyes have been graciously opened with prophetic inspiration, and the promise of the heathen as an inheritance hath marvellously recurred to me. For there can be none lack such diligence in the True Faith, but may see that even the conversion of these pitiful salvages hath a meaning. As the blessed St. Ignatius discreetly observes," continued Father José, clearing his throat and slightly elevating his voice, "'the heathen is given to the warriors of Christ, even as the pearls of rare discovery which gladden the hearts of shipmen.' Nay, I might say —"

But here the stranger, who had been wrinkling his brows and twisting his mustaches with well-bred patience, took advantage of an oratorical pause: —

"It grieves me, Sir Priest, to interrupt the current of your eloquence as discourteously as I have already broken your meditations; but the day already waneth to night. I have a matter of serious import to make with you, could I entreat your cautious consideration a few moments."

Father José hesitated. The temptation was great, and the prospect of acquiring some knowledge of the Great Enemy's plans not the least trifling object. And if the truth must be told, there was a certain decorum about the stranger that interested the Padre. Though well aware of the Protean shapes the Arch-Fiend could assume, and though free from the weaknesses of the flesh, Father José was not above the temptations of the spirit. Had the Devil appeared, as in the case of the pious St. Anthony, in the likeness of a comely damsel, the good Father, with his certain experience of the deceitful sex, would have whisked her away in the saying of a paternoster. But there was, added to the security of age, a grave sadness about the stranger, — a thoughtful consciousness as of being at a great moral disadvantage, — which at once decided him on a magnanimous course of conduct.

The stranger then proceeded to inform him, that he had been diligently observing the Holy Father's triumphs in the valley. That, far from being greatly exercised thereat, he had been only grieved to see so enthusiastic and chivalrous an antagonist wasting his zeal in a hopeless work. For, he observed, the issue of the great battle of Good and Evil had been otherwise settled, as he would presently show him. "It wants but a few moments of night," he continued, "and over this interval of twilight, as you know, I have been given complete control. Look to the West."

As the Padre turned, the stranger took his enormous hat from his head, and waved it three times before him. At each sweep of the prodigious feather, the fog grew thinner, until it melted impalpably away, and the former landscape returned, yet warm with the glowing sun. As Father José gazed, a strain of martial music arose from the valley, and issuing from a deep *cañon*, the good Father beheld a long cavalcade of gallant cavaliers, habited like his companion. As they swept down the plain, they were joined by like processions, that slowly defiled from every ravine and *cañon* of the mysterious mountain. From time to time the peal of a trumpet swelled fitfully upon the breeze; the cross of Santiago glittered, and the royal banners of Castile and Aragon waved over the moving column. So they moved on solemnly toward the

sea, where, in the distance, Father José saw stately caravels, bearing the same familiar banner, awaiting them. The good Padre gazed with conflicting emotions, and the serious voice of the stranger broke the silence.

"Thou hast beheld, Sir Priest, the fading footprints of adventurous Castile. Thou hast seen the declining glory of old Spain, — declining as yonder brilliant sun. The sceptre she hath wrested from the heathen is fast dropping from her decrepit and fleshless grasp. The children she hath fostered shall know her no longer. The soil she hath acquired shall be lost to her as irrevocably as she herself hath thrust the Moor from her own Granada."

The stranger paused, and his voice seemed broken by emotion; at the same time, Father José, whose sympathizing heart yearned toward the departing banners, cried in poignant accents, —

"Farewell, ye gallant cavaliers and Christian soldiers! Farewell, thou, Nuñes de Balboa! thou, Alonzo de Ojeda! and thou, most venerable Las Casas! Farewell, and may Heaven prosper still the seed ye left behind!"

Then turning to the stranger, Father José beheld him gravely draw his pocket-handkerchief from the basket-hilt of his rapier, and apply it decorously to his eyes.

"Pardon this weakness, Sir Priest," said the

cavalier, apologetically; "but these worthy gentlemen were ancient friends of mine, and have done me many a delicate service,—much more, perchance, than these poor sables may signify," he added, with a grim gesture toward the mourning suit he wore.

Father José was too much preoccupied in reflection to notice the equivocal nature of this tribute, and, after a few moments' silence, said, as if continuing his thought, —

"But the seed they have planted shall thrive and prosper on this fruitful soil."

As if answering the interrogatory, the stranger turned to the opposite direction, and, again waving his hat, said, in the same serious tone, —

"Look to the East!"

The Father turned, and, as the fog broke away before the waving plume, he saw that the sun was rising. Issuing with its bright beams through the passes of the snowy mountains beyond, appeared a strange and motley crew. Instead of the dark and romantic visages of his last phantom train, the Father beheld with strange concern the blue eyes and flaxen hair of a Saxon race. In place of martial airs and musical utterance, there rose upon the ear a strange din of harsh gutturals and singular sibilation. Instead of the decorous tread and stately mien of the cavaliers of the former vision, they came pushing, bustling, panting, and

swaggering. And as they passed, the good Father noticed that giant trees were prostrated as with the breath of a tornado, and the bowels of the earth were torn and rent as with a convulsion. And Father José looked in vain for holy cross or Christian symbol; there was but one that seemed an ensign, and he crossed himself with holy horror as he perceived it bore the effigy of a bear.

"Who are these swaggering Ishmaelites?" he asked, with something of asperity in his tone.

The stranger was gravely silent.

"What do they here, with neither cross nor holy symbol?" he again demanded.

"Have you the courage to see, Sir Priest?" responded the stranger, quietly.

Father José felt his crucifix, as a lonely traveller might his rapier, and assented.

"Step under the shadow of my plume," said the stranger.

Father José stepped beside him, and they instantly sank through the earth.

When he opened his eyes, which had remained closed in prayerful meditation during his rapid descent, he found himself in a vast vault, bespangled overhead with luminous points like the starred firmament. It was also lighted by a yellow glow that seemed to proceed from a mighty sea or lake that occupied the centre of the chamber. Around this subterranean sea dusky figures flitted, bearing

ladles filled with the yellow fluid, which they had replenished from its depths. From this lake diverging streams of the same mysterious flood penetrated like mighty rivers the cavernous distance. As they walked by the banks of this glittering Styx, Father José perceived how the liquid stream at certain places became solid. The ground was strewn with glittering flakes. One of these the Padre picked up and curiously examined. It was virgin gold.

An expression of discomfiture overcast the good Father's face at this discovery; but there was trace neither of malice nor satisfaction in the stranger's air, which was still of serious and fateful contemplation. When Father José recovered his equanimity, he said, bitterly, —

"This, then, Sir Devil, is your work! This is your deceitful lure for the weak souls of sinful nations! So would you replace the Christian grace of holy Spain!"

"This is what must be," returned the stranger, gloomily. "But listen, Sir Priest. It lies with you to avert the issue for a time. Leave me here in peace. Go back to Castile, and take with you your bells, your images, and your missions. Continue here, and you only precipitate results. Stay! promise me you will do this, and you shall not lack that which will render your old age an ornament and a blessing"; and the stranger motioned significantly to the lake.

It was here, the legend discreetly relates, that the Devil showed — as he always shows sooner or later — his cloven hoof. The worthy Padre, sorely perplexed by his threefold vision, and, if the truth must be told, a little nettled at this wresting away of the glory of holy Spanish discovery, had shown some hesitation. But the unlucky bribe of the Enemy of Souls touched his Castilian spirit. Starting back in deep disgust, he brandished his crucifix in the face of the unmasked Fiend, and in a voice that made the dusky vault resound, cried, —

"Avaunt thee, Sathanas! Diabolus, I defy thee! What! wouldst thou bribe me, — me, a brother of the Sacred Society of the Holy Jesus, Licentiate of Cordova and Inquisitor of Guadalaxara? Thinkest thou to buy me with thy sordid treasure? Avaunt!"

What might have been the issue of this rupture, and how complete might have been the triumph of the Holy Father over the Arch-Fiend, who was recoiling aghast at these sacred titles and the flourishing symbol, we can never know, for at that moment the crucifix slipped through his fingers.

Scarcely had it touched the ground before Devil and Holy Father simultaneously cast themselves toward it. In the struggle they clinched, and the pious José, who was as much the superior of his antagonist in bodily as in spiritual strength, was

about to treat the Great Adversary to a back somersault, when he suddenly felt the long nails of the stranger piercing his flesh. A new fear seized his heart, a numbing chillness crept through his body, and he struggled to free himself, but in vain. A strange roaring was in his ears; the lake and cavern danced before his eyes and vanished; and with a loud cry he sank senseless to the ground.

When he recovered his consciousness he was aware of a gentle swaying motion of his body. He opened his eyes, and saw it was high noon, and that he was being carried in a litter through the valley. He felt stiff, and, looking down, perceived that his arm was tightly bandaged to his side.

He closed his eyes and after a few words of thankful prayer, thought how miraculously he had been preserved, and made a vow of candlesticks to the blessed Saint José. He then called in a faint voice, and presently the penitent Ignacio stood beside him.

The joy the poor fellow felt at his patron's returning consciousness for some time choked his utterance. He could only ejaculate, "A miracle! Blessed Saint José, he lives!" and kiss the Padre's bandaged hand. Father José, more intent on his last night's experience, waited for his emotion to subside, and asked where he had been found.

"On the mountain, your Reverence, but a few *varas* from where he attacked you."

"How?—you saw him then?" asked the Padre, in unfeigned astonishment.

"Saw him, your Reverence! Mother of God, I should think I did! And your Reverence shall see him too, if he ever comes again within range of Ignacio's arquebuse."

"What mean you, Ignacio?" said the Padre, sitting bolt-upright in his litter.

"Why, the bear, your Reverence,—the bear, Holy Father, who attacked your worshipful person while you were meditating on the top of yonder mountain."

"Ah!" said the Holy Father, lying down again. "Chut, child! I would be at peace."

When he reached the Mission, he was tenderly cared for, and in a few weeks was enabled to resume those duties from which, as will be seen, not even the machinations of the Evil One could divert him. The news of his physical disaster spread over the country; and a letter to the Bishop of Guadalaxara contained a confidential and detailed account of the good Father's spiritual temptation. But in some way the story leaked out; and long after José was gathered to his fathers, his mysterious encounter formed the theme of thrilling and whispered narrative. The mountain was generally shunned. It is true that Señor Joaquin Pedrillo afterward located a grant near the base of the mountain; but as Señora Pedrillo was known to be

a termagant half-breed, the Señor was not supposed to be over-fastidious.

Such is the Legend of Monte del Diablo. As I said before, it may seem to lack essential corroboration. The discrepancy between the Father's narrative and the actual climax has given rise to some scepticism on the part of ingenious quibblers. All such I would simply refer to that part of the report of Señor Julio Serro, Sub-Prefect of San Pablo, before whom attest of the above was made. Touching this matter, the worthy Prefect observes, "That although the body of Father José doth show evidence of grievous conflict in the flesh, yet that is no proof that the Enemy of Souls, who could assume the figure of a decorous elderly *caballero*, could not at the same time transform himself into a bear for his own vile purposes."

THE ADVENTURE OF PADRE VICENTIO.

A LEGEND OF SAN FRANCISCO.

ONE pleasant New Year's Eve, about forty years ago, Padre Vicentio was slowly picking his way across the sand-hills from the Mission Dolores. As he climbed the crest of the ridge beside Mission Creek, his broad, shining face might have been easily mistaken for the beneficent image of the rising moon, so bland was its smile and so indefinite its features. For the Padre was a man of notable reputation and character; his ministration at the mission of San José had been marked with cordiality and unction; he was adored by the simple-minded savages, and had succeeded in impressing his individuality so strongly upon them that the very children were said to have miraculously resembled him in feature.

As the holy man reached the loneliest portion of the road, he naturally put spurs to his mule as if to quicken that decorous pace which the obedient animal had acquired through long experience of its master's habits. The locality had an unfavorable reputation. Sailors — deserters from whaleships — had been seen lurking about the

outskirts of the town, and low scrub oaks which everywhere beset the trail might have easily concealed some desperate runaway. Besides these material obstructions, the devil, whose hostility to the church was well known, was said to sometimes haunt the vicinity in the likeness of a spectral whaler, who had met his death in a drunken bout, from a harpoon in the hands of a companion. The ghost of this unfortunate mariner was frequently observed sitting on the hill toward the dusk of evening, armed with his favorite weapon and a tub containing a coil of line, looking out for some belated traveller on whom to exercise his professional skill. It is related that the good Father José Maria of the Mission Dolores had been twice attacked by this phantom sportsman; that once, on returning from San Francisco, and panting with exertion from climbing the hill, he was startled by a stentorian cry of "There she blows!" quickly followed by a hurtling harpoon, which buried itself in the sand beside him; that on another occasion he narrowly escaped destruction, his serapa having been transfixed by the diabolical harpoon and dragged away in triumph. Popular opinion seems to have been divided as to the reason for the devil's particular attention to Father José, some asserting that the extreme piety of the Padre excited the Evil One's animosity, and others that his adipose tendency simply rendered

him, from a professional view-point, a profitable capture.

Had Father Vicentio been inclined to scoff at this apparition as a heretical innovation, there was still the story of Concepcion, the Demon Vaquero, whose terrible *riata* was fully as potent as the whaler's harpoon. Concepcion, when in the flesh, had been a celebrated herder of cattle and wild horses, and was reported to have chased the devil in the shape of a fleet *pinto* colt all the way from San Luis Obispo to San Francisco, vowing not to give up the chase until he had overtaken the disguised Arch-Enemy. This the devil prevented by resuming his own shape, but kept the unfortunate vaquero to the fulfilment of his rash vow; and Concepcion still scoured the coast on a phantom steed, beguiling the monotony of his eternal pursuit by lassoing travellers, dragging them at the heels of his unbroken mustang until they were eventually picked up, half-strangled, by the roadside. The Padre listened attentively for the tramp of this terrible rider. But no footfall broke the stillness of the night; even the hoofs of his own mule sank noiselessly in the shifting sand. Now and then a rabbit bounded lightly by him, or a quail ran into the bushes. The melancholy call of plover from the adjoining marshes of Mission Creek came to him so faintly and fitfully that it seemed almost a recollection of the past rather than a reality of the present.

To add to his discomposure one of those heavy sea-fogs peculiar to the locality began to drift across the hills and presently encompassed him. While endeavoring to evade its cold embraces, Padre Vicentio incautiously drove his heavy spurs into the flanks of his mule as that puzzled animal was hesitating on the brink of a steep declivity. Whether the poor beast was indignant at this novel outrage, or had been for some time reflecting on the evils of being priest-ridden, has not transpired; enough that he suddenly threw up his heels, pitching the reverend man over his head, and, having accomplished this feat, coolly dropped on his knees and tumbled after his rider.

Over and over went the Padre, closely followed by his faithless mule. Luckily the little hollow which received the pair was of sand that yielded to the superincumbent weight, half burying them without further injury. For some moments the poor man lay motionless, vainly endeavoring to collect his scattered senses. A hand irreverently laid upon his collar, and a rough shake, assisted to recall his consciousness. As the Padre staggered to his feet he found himself confronted by a stranger.

Seen dimly through the fog, and under circumstances that to say the least were not prepossessing, the new-comer had an inexpressibly mysterious and brigand-like aspect. A long boat-cloak con-

cealed his figure, and a slouched hat hid his features, permitting only his eyes to glisten in the depths. With a deep groan the Padre slipped from the stranger's grasp and subsided into the soft sand again.

"Gad's life!" said the stranger, pettishly, "hast no more bones in thy fat carcass than a jelly-fish? Lend a hand, here! Yo, heave ho!" and he dragged the Padre into an upright position. "Now, then, who and what art thou?"

The Padre could not help thinking that the question might have more properly been asked by himself; but with an odd mixture of dignity and trepidation he began enumerating his different titles, which were by no means brief, and would have been alone sufficient to strike awe in the bosom of an ordinary adversary. The stranger irreverently broke in upon his formal phrases, and assuring him that a priest was the very person he was looking for, coolly replaced the old man's hat, which had tumbled off, and bade him accompany him at once on an errand of spiritual counsel to one who was even then lying in extremity. "To think," said the stranger, "that I should stumble upon the very man I was seeking! Body of Bacchus! but this is lucky! Follow me quickly, for there is no time to lose."

Like most easy natures the positive assertion of the stranger, and withal a certain authoritative air

of command, overcame what slight objections the Padre might have feebly nurtured during this remarkable interview. The spiritual invitation was one, also, that he dared not refuse; not only that; but it tended somewhat to remove the superstitious dread with which he had begun to regard the mysterious stranger. But, following at a respectful distance, the Padre could not help observing with a thrill of horror that the stranger's footsteps made no impression on the sand, and his figure seemed at times to blend and incorporate itself with the fog, until the holy man was obliged to wait for its reappearance. In one of these intervals of embarrassment he heard the ringing of the far-off Mission bell, proclaiming the hour of midnight. Scarcely had the last stroke died away before the announcement was taken up and repeated by a multitude of bells of all sizes, and the air was filled with the sound of striking clocks and the pealing of steeple chimes. The old man uttered a cry of alarm. The stranger sharply demanded the cause. "The bells! did you not hear them?" gasped Padre Vicentio. "Tush! tush!" answered the stranger, "thy fall hath set triple bob-majors ringing in thine ears. Come on!"

The Padre was only too glad to accept the explanation conveyed in this discourteous answer. But he was destined for another singular experience. When they had reached the summit of the

eminence now known as Russian Hill, an exclamation again burst from the Padre. The stranger turned to his companion with an impatient gesture; but the Padre heeded him not. The view that burst upon his sight was such as might well have engrossed the attention of a more enthusiastic temperament. The fog had not yet reached the hill, and the long valleys and hillsides of the embarcadero below were glittering with the light of a populous city. "Look!" said the Padre, stretching his hand over the spreading landscape. "Look, dost thou not see the stately squares and brilliantly lighted avenues of a mighty metropolis. Dost thou not see, as it were, another firmament below?"

"Avast heaving, reverend man, and quit this folly," said the stranger, dragging the bewildered Padre after him. "Behold rather the stars knocked out of thy hollow noddle by the fall thou hast had. Prithee, get over thy visions and rhapsodies, for the time is wearing apace."

The Padre humbly followed without another word. Descending the hill toward the north, the stranger leading the way, in a few moments the Padre detected the wash of waves, and presently his feet struck the firmer sand of the beach. Here the stranger paused, and the Padre perceived a boat lying in readiness hard by. As he stepped into the stern sheets, in obedience to the command

of his companion, he noticed that the rowers seemed to partake of the misty incorporeal texture of his companion, a similarity that became the more distressing when he perceived also that their oars in pulling together made no noise. The stranger, assuming the helm, guided the boat on quietly, while the fog, settling over the face of the water and closing around them, seemed to interpose a muffled wall between themselves and the rude jarring of the outer world. As they pushed further into this penetralia, the Padre listened anxiously for the sound of creaking blocks and the rattling of cordage, but no vibration broke the veiled stillness or disturbed the warm breath of the fleecy fog. Only one incident occurred to break the monotony of their mysterious journey. A one-eyed rower, who sat in front of the Padre, catching the devout father's eye, immediately grinned such a ghastly smile, and winked his remaining eye with such diabolical intensity of meaning that the Padre was constrained to utter a pious ejaculation, which had the disastrous effect of causing the marine Cocles to "catch a crab," throwing his heels in the air and his head into the bottom of the boat. But even this accident did not disturb the gravity of the rest of the ghastly boat's crew.

When, as it seemed to the Padre, ten minutes had elapsed, the outline of a large ship loomed up

directly across their bow. Before he could utter the cry of warning that rose to his lips, or brace himself against the expected shock, the boat passed gently and noiselessly through the sides of the vessel, and the holy man found himself standing on the berth deck of what seemed to be an ancient caravel. The boat and boat's crew had vanished. Only his mysterious friend, the stranger, remained. By the light of a swinging lamp the Padre beheld him standing beside a hammock, whereon, apparently, lay the dying man to whom he had been so mysteriously summoned. As the Padre, in obedience to a sign from his companion, stepped to the side of the sufferer, he feebly opened his eyes and thus addressed him: —

"Thou seest before thee, reverend father, a helpless mortal, struggling not only with the last agonies of the flesh, but beaten down and tossed with sore anguish of the spirit. It matters little when or how I became what thou now seest me. Enough that my life has been ungodly and sinful, and that my only hope of absolution lies in my imparting to thee a secret which is of vast importance to the holy Church, and affects greatly her power, wealth, and dominion on these shores. But the terms of this secret and the conditions of my absolution are peculiar. I have but five minutes to live. In that time I must receive the extreme unction of the Church."

"And thy secret?" said the holy father.

"Shall be told afterwards," answered the dying man. "Come, my time is short. Shrive me quickly."

The Padre hesitated. "Couldst thou not tell this secret first?"

"Impossible!" said the dying man, with what seemed to the Padre a momentary gleam of triumph. Then, as his breath grew feebler, he called impatiently, "Shrive me! shrive me!"

"Let me know at least what this secret concerns?" suggested the Padre, insinuatingly.

"Shrive me first," said the dying man.

But the priest still hesitated, parleying with the sufferer until the ship's bell struck, when, with a triumphant, mocking laugh from the stranger, the vessel suddenly fell to pieces, amid the rushing of waters which at once involved the dying man, the priest, and the mysterious stranger.

The Padre did not recover his consciousness until high noon the next day, when he found himself lying in a little hollow between the Mission Hills, and his faithful mule a few paces from him, cropping the sparse herbage. The Padre made the best of his way home, but wisely abstained from narrating the facts mentioned above, until after the discovery of gold, when the whole of this veracious incident was related, with the assertion of the padre that the secret which was thus mys-

teriously snatched from his possession was nothing more than the discovery of gold, years since, by the runaway sailors from the expedition of Sir Francis Drake.

THE LEGEND OF DEVIL'S POINT.

ON the northerly shore of San Francisco Bay, at a point where the Golden Gate broadens into the Pacific stands a bluff promontory. It affords shelter from the prevailing winds to a semi-circular bay on the east. Around this bay the hillside is bleak and barren, but there are traces of former habitation in a weather-beaten cabin and deserted corral. It is said that these were originally built by an enterprising squatter, who for some unaccountable reason abandoned them shortly after. The "Jumper" who succeeded him disappeared one day, quite as mysteriously. The third tenant, who seemed to be a man of sanguine, hopeful temperament, divided the property into building lots, staked off the hillside, and projected the map of a new metropolis. Failing, however, to convince the citizens of San Francisco that they had mistaken the site of their city, he presently fell into dissipation and despondency. He was frequently observed haunting the narrow strip of beach at low tide, or perched upon the cliff at high water. In the latter position a sheep-tender one day found him, cold and pulseless, with a map

of his property in his hand, and his face turned toward the distant sea.

Perhaps these circumstances gave the locality its infelicitous reputation. Vague rumors were bruited of a supernatural influence that had been exercised on the tenants. Strange stories were circulated of the origin of the diabolical title by which the promontory was known. By some it was believed to be haunted by the spirit of one of Sir Francis Drake's sailors who had deserted his ship in consequence of stories told by the Indians of gold discoveries, but who had perished by starvation on the rocks. A *vaquero* who had once passed a night in the ruined cabin, related how a strangely dressed and emaciated figure had knocked at the door at midnight and demanded food. Other story-tellers, of more historical accuracy, roundly asserted that Sir Francis himself had been little better than a pirate, and had chosen this spot to conceal quantities of ill-gotten booty, taken from neutral bottoms, and had protected his hiding-place by the orthodox means of hellish incantation and diabolic agencies. On moonlight nights a shadowy ship was sometimes seen standing off-and-on, or when fogs encompassed sea and shore the noise of oars rising and falling in their row-locks could be heard muffled and indistinctly during the night. Whatever foundation there might have been for these stories, it was certain that a more

weird and desolate-looking spot could not have been selected for their theatre. High hills, verdureless and enfiladed with dark cañadas, cast their gaunt shadows on the tide. During a greater portion of the day the wind, which blew furiously and incessantly, seemed possessed with a spirit of fierce disquiet and unrest. Toward nightfall the sea-fog crept with soft step through the portals of the Golden Gate, or stole in noiseless marches down the hillside, tenderly soothing the wind-buffeted face of the cliff, until sea and sky were hid together. At such times the populous city beyond and the nearer settlement seemed removed to an infinite distance. An immeasurable loneliness settled upon the cliff. The creaking of a windlass, or the monotonous chant of sailors on some unseen, outlying ship, came faint and far, and full of mystic suggestion.

About a year ago a well-to-do middle-aged broker of San Francisco found himself at nightfall the sole occupant of a "plunger," encompassed in a dense fog, and drifting toward the Golden Gate. This unexpected termination of an afternoon's sail was partly attributable to his want of nautical skill, and partly to the effect of his usually sanguine nature. Having given up the guidance of his boat to the wind and tide, he had trusted too implicitly for that reaction which his business experience assured him was certain to occur

in all affairs, aquatic as well as terrestrial. "The tide will turn soon," said the broker, confidently, "or something will happen." He had scarcely settled himself back again in the stern-sheets, before the bow of the plunger, obeying some mysterious impulse, veered slowly around and a dark object loomed up before him. A gentle eddy carried the boat further in shore, until at last it was completely embayed under the lee of a rocky point now faintly discernible through the fog. He looked around him in the vain hope of recognizing some familiar headland. The tops of the high hills which rose on either side were hidden in the fog. As the boat swung around, he succeeded in fastening a line to the rocks, and sat down again with a feeling of renewed confidence and security.

It was very cold. The insidious fog penetrated his tightly buttoned coat, and set his teeth to chattering in spite of the aid he sometimes drew from a pocket-flask. His clothes were wet and the stern-sheets were covered with spray. The comforts of fire and shelter continually rose before his fancy as he gazed wistfully on the rocks. In sheer despair he finally drew the boat toward the most accessible part of the cliff and essayed to ascend. This was less difficult than it appeared, and in a few moments he had gained the hill above. A dark object at a little distance attracted his attention, and on approaching it proved to be a deserted

cabin. The story goes on to say, that having built a roaring fire of stakes pulled from the adjoining corral, with the aid of a flask of excellent brandy, he managed to pass the early part of the evening with comparative comfort.

There was no door in the cabin, and the windows were simply square openings, which freely admitted the searching fog. But in spite of these discomforts, — being a man of cheerful, sanguine temperament, — he amused himself by poking the fire, and watching the ruddy glow which the flames threw on the fog from the open door. In this innocent occupation a great weariness overcame him, and he fell asleep.

He was awakened at midnight by a loud "halloo," which seemed to proceed directly from the sea. Thinking it might be the cry of some boatman lost in the fog, he walked to the edge of the cliff, but the thick veil that covered sea and land rendered all objects at the distance of a few feet indistinguishable. He heard, however, the regular strokes of oars rising and falling on the water. The halloo was repeated. He was clearing his throat to reply, when to his surprise an answer came apparently from the very cabin he had quitted. Hastily retracing his steps, he was the more amazed, on reaching the open door, to find a stranger warming himself by the fire. Stepping back far enough to conceal his own person, he took a good look at the intruder.

He was a man of about forty, with a cadaverous face. But the oddity of his dress attracted the broker's attention more than his lugubrious physiognomy. His legs were hid in enormously wide trousers descending to his knee, where they met long boots of sealskin. A pea-jacket with exaggerated cuffs, almost as large as the breeches, covered his chest, and around his waist a monstrous belt, with a buckle like a dentist's sign, supported two trumpet-mouthed pistols and a curved hanger. He wore a long queue, which depended half-way down his back. As the firelight fell on his ingenuous countenance the broker observed with some concern that this queue was formed entirely of a kind of tobacco, known as pigtail or twist. Its effect, the broker remarked, was much heightened when in a moment of thoughtful abstraction the apparition bit off a portion of it, and rolled it as a quid into the cavernous recesses of his jaws.

Meanwhile, the nearer splash of oars indicated the approach of the unseen boat. The broker had barely time to conceal himself behind the cabin before a number of uncouth-looking figures clambered up the hill toward the ruined rendezvous. They were dressed like the previous comer, who, as they passed through the open door, exchanged greetings with each in antique phraseology, bestowing at the same time some familiar nickname. Flash-in-the-Pan, Spitter-of-Frogs, Malmsey Butt,

Latheyard-Will, and Mark-the-Pinker, were the few *sobriquets* the broker remembered. Whether these titles were given to express some peculiarity of their owner he could not tell, for a silence followed as they slowly ranged themselves upon the floor of the cabin in a semicircle around their cadaverous host.

At length Malmsey Butt, a spherical-bodied man-of-war's-man, with a rubicund nose, got on his legs somewhat unsteadily, and addressed himself to the company. They had met that evening, said the speaker, in accordance with a time-honored custom. This was simply to relieve that one of their number who for fifty years had kept watch and ward over the locality where certain treasures had been buried. At this point the broker pricked up his ears. "If so be, camarados and brothers all," he continued, "ye are ready to receive the report of our excellent and well-beloved brother, Master Slit-the-Weazand, touching his search for this treasure, why, marry, to 't and begin."

A murmur of assent went around the circle as the speaker resumed his seat. Master Slit-the-Weazand slowly opened his lantern jaws, and began. He had spent much of his time in determining the exact location of the teasure. He believed — nay, he could state positively — that its position was now settled. It was true he had done some trifling little business outside. Modes-

ty forbade his mentioning the particulars, but he would simply state that of the three tenants who had occupied the cabin during the past ten years, none were now alive. [Applause, and cries of "Go to! thou wast always a tall fellow!" and the like.]

Mark-the-Pinker next arose. Before proceeding to business he had a duty to perform in the sacred name of Friendship. It ill became him to pass an eulogy upon the qualities of the speaker who had preceded him, for he had known him from "boyhood's hour." Side by side they had wrought together in the Spanish war. For a neat hand with a toledo he challenged his equal, while how nobly and beautifully he had won his present title of Slit-the-Weazand, all could testify. The speaker, with some show of emotion, asked to be pardoned if he dwelt too freely on passages of their early companionship; he then detailed, with a fine touch of humor, his comrade's peculiar manner of slitting the ears and lips of a refractory Jew, who had been captured in one of their previous voyages. He would not weary the patience of his hearers, but would briefly propose that the report of Slit-the-Weazand be accepted, and that the thanks of the company be tendered him.

A beaker of strong spirits was then rolled into the hut, and cans of grog were circulated freely from hand to hand. The health of Slit-the-Weaz-

and was proposed in a neat speech by Mark-the-Pinker, and responded to by the former gentleman in a manner that drew tears to the eyes of all present. To the broker, in his concealment, this momentary diversion from the real business of the meeting occasioned much anxiety. As yet nothing had been said to indicate the exact locality of the treasure to which they had mysteriously alluded. Fear restrained him from open inquiry, and curiosity kept him from making good his escape during the orgies which followed.

But his situation was beginning to become critical. Flash-in-the-Pan, who seemed to have been a man of choleric humor, taking fire during some hotly contested argument, discharged both his pistols at the breast of his opponent. The balls passed through on each side immediately below his arm-pits, making a clean hole, through which the horrified broker could see the firelight behind him. The wounded man, without betraying any concern, excited the laughter of the company, by jocosely putting his arms akimbo, and inserting his thumbs into the orifices of the wounds, as if they had been arm-holes. This having in a measure restored good-humor, the party joined hands and formed a circle preparatory to dancing. The dance was commenced by some monotonous stanzas hummed in a very high key by one of the party, the rest joining in the following chorus, which seemed to present a familiar sound to the broker's ear.

"Her Majestie is very sicke,
Lord Essex hath ye measles,
Our Admiral hath licked ye French —
Poppe! saith ye weasel!"

At the regular recurrence of the last line, the party discharged their loaded pistols in all directions, rendering the position of the unhappy broker one of extreme peril and perplexity.

When the tumult had partially subsided, Flash-in-the-Pan called the meeting to order, and most of the revellers returned to their places, Malmsey Butt, however, insisting upon another chorus, and singing at the top of his voice: —

"I am ycleped J. Keyser — I was born at Spring, hys Garden,
My father toe make me ane clerke erst did essaye,
But a fico for ye offis — I spurn ye losels offeire;
For I fain would be ane butcher by'r ladykin alwaye."

Flash-in-the-Pan drew a pistol from his belt, and bidding some one gag Malmsey Butt with the stock of it, proceeded to read from a portentous roll of parchment that he held in his hand. It was a semi-legal document, clothed in the quaint phraseology of a bygone period. After a long preamble, asserting their loyalty as lieges of Her most bountiful Majesty and Sovereign Lady the Queen, the document declared that they then and there took possession of the promontory, and all the treasure trove therein contained, formerly buried by Her Majesty's most faithful and devoted

Admiral Sir Francis Drake, with the right to search, discover, and appropriate the same; and for the purpose thereof they did then and there form a guild or corporation to so discover, search for, and disclose said treasures, and by virtue thereof they solemnly subscribed their names. But at this moment the reading of the parchment was arrested by an exclamation from the assembly, and the broker was seen frantically struggling at the door in the strong arms of Mark-the-Pinker.

"Let me go!" he cried, as he made a desperate attempt to reach the side of Master Flash-in-the Pan. "Let me go! I tell you, gentlemen, that document is not worth the parchment it is written on. The laws of the State, the customs of the country, the mining ordinances, are all against it. Don't, by all that 's sacred, throw away such a capital investment through ignorance and informality. Let me go! I assure you, gentlemen, professionally, that you have a big thing, — a remarkably big thing, and even if I ain't in it, I 'm not going to see it fall through. Don't, for God's sake, gentlemen, I implore you, put your names to such a ridiculous paper. There is n't a notary—"

He ceased. The figures around him, which were beginning to grow fainter and more indistinct, as he went on, swam before his eyes, flickered, reappeared again, and finally went out. He rubbed his eyes and gazed around him. The cabin was

deserted. On the hearth the red embers of his fire were fading away in the bright beams of the morning sun, that looked aslant through the open window. He ran out to the cliff. The sturdy sea-breeze fanned his feverish cheeks, and tossed the white caps of waves that beat in pleasant music on the beach below. A stately merchantman with snowy canvas was entering the Gate. The voices of sailors came cheerfully from a bark at anchor below the point. The muskets of the sentries gleamed brightly on Alcatraz, and the rolling of drums swelled on the breeze. Farther on, the hills of San Francisco, cottage-crowned and bordered with wharves and warehouses, met his longing eye.

Such is the Legend of Devil's Point. Any objections to its reliability may be met with the statement, that the broker who tells the story has since incorporated a company under the title of "Flash-in-the-Pan Gold and Silver Treasure Mining Company," and that its shares are already held at a stiff figure. A copy of the original document is said to be on record in the office of the company, and on any clear day the locality of the claim may be distinctly seen from the hills of San Francisco.

THE DEVIL AND THE BROKER.

A MEDIÆVAL LEGEND.

THE church clocks in San Francisco were striking ten. The Devil, who had been flying over the city that evening, just then alighted on the roof of a church near the corner of Bush and Montgomery Streets. It will be perceived that the popular belief that the Devil avoids holy edifices, and vanishes at the sound of a *Credo* or *Pater-noster*, is long since exploded. Indeed, modern scepticism asserts that he is not averse to these orthodox discourses, which particularly bear reference to himself, and in a measure recognize his power and importance.

I am inclined to think, however, that his choice of a resting-place was a good deal influenced by its contiguity to a populous thoroughfare. When he was comfortably seated, he began pulling out the joints of a small rod which he held in his hand, and which presently proved to be an extraordinary fishing-pole, with a telescopic adjustment that permitted its protraction to a marvellous extent. Affixing a line thereto, he selected a fly of a particular pattern from a small box which he carried

with him, and, making a skilful cast, threw his line into the very centre of that living stream which ebbed and flowed through Montgomery Street.

Either the people were very virtuous that evening or the bait was not a taking one. In vain the Devil whipped the stream at an eddy in front of the Occidental, or trolled his line into the shadows of the Cosmopolitan; five minutes passed without even a nibble. "Dear me!" quoth the Devil, "that 's very singular; one of my most popular flies, too! Why, they 'd have risen by shoals in Broadway or Beacon Street for that. Well, here goes another." And, fitting a new fly from his well-filled box, he gracefully recast his line.

For a few moments there was every prospect of sport. The line was continually bobbing and the nibbles were distinct and gratifying. Once or twice the bait was apparently gorged and carried off in the upper stories of the hotels to be digested at leisure. At such times the professional manner in which the Devil played out his line would have thrilled the heart of Izaak Walton. But his efforts were unsuccessful; the bait was invariably carried off without hooking the victim, and the Devil finally lost his temper. "I 've heard of these San-Franciscans before," he muttered; "wait till I get hold of one, — that 's all!" he added malevolently, as he rebaited his hook. A sharp tug and a wriggle foiled his next trial, and

finally, with considerable effort, he landed a portly two-hundred-pound broker upon the church roof.

As the victim lay there gasping, it was evident that the Devil was in no hurry to remove the hook from his gills; nor did he exhibit in this delicate operation that courtesy of manner and graceful manipulation which usually distinguished him.

"Come," he said, gruffly, as he grasped the broker by the waistband, "quit that whining and grunting. Don't flatter yourself that you 're a prize either. I was certain to have had you. It was only a question of time."

"It is not that, my lord, which troubles me," whined the unfortunate wretch, as he painfully wriggled his head, "but that I should have been fooled by such a paltry bait. What will they say of me down there? To have let 'bigger things' go by, and to be taken in by this cheap trick," he added, as he groaned and glanced at the fly which the Devil was carefully rearranging, "is what, — pardon me, my lord, — is what gets me!"

"Yes," said the Devil, philosophically, "I never caught anybody yet who did n't say that; but tell me, ain't you getting somewhat fastidious down there? Here is one of my most popular flies, the greenback," he continued, exhibiting an emerald-looking insect, which he drew from his box. "This, so generally considered excellent in election season, has not even been nibbled at. Perhaps your

sagacity, which, in spite of this unfortunate *contre-temps*, no one can doubt," added the Devil, with a graceful return to his usual courtesy, "may explain the reason or suggest a substitute."

The broker glanced at the contents of the box with a supercilious smile. "Too old-fashioned, my lord, — long ago played out. Yet," he added, with a gleam of interest, "for a consideration I might offer something — ahem! — that would make a taking substitute for these trifles. Give me," he continued, in a brisk, business-like way, "a slight percentage and a bonus down, and I 'm your man."

"Name your terms," said the Devil, earnestly.

"My liberty and a percentage on all you take, and the thing 's done."

The Devil caressed his tail thoughtfully, for a few moments. He was certain of the broker any way, and the risk was slight. "Done!" he said.

"Stay a moment," said the artful broker. "There are certain contingencies. Give me your fishing-rod and let me apply the bait myself. It requires a skilful hand, my lord; even your well-known experience might fail. Leave me alone for half an hour, and if you have reason to complain of my success I will forfeit my deposit, — I mean my liberty."

The Devil acceded to his request, bowed, and withdrew. Alighting gracefully in Montgomery Street, he dropped into Meade & Co.'s clothing

store, where, having completely equipped himself *à la mode*, he sallied forth intent on his personal enjoyment. Determining to sink his professional character, he mingled with the current of human life, and enjoyed, with that immense capacity for excitement peculiar to his nature, the whirl, bustle, and feverishness of the people, as a purely æsthetic gratification unalloyed by the cares of business. What he did that evening does not belong to our story. We return to the broker, whom we left on the roof.

When he made sure that the Devil had retired, he carefully drew from his pocket-book a slip of paper and affixed it on the hook. The line had scarcely reached the current before he felt a bite. The hook was swallowed. To bring up his victim rapidly, disengage him from the hook, and reset his line, was the work of a moment. Another bite and the same result. Another, and another. In a very few minutes the roof was covered with his panting spoil. The broker could himself distinguish that many of them were personal friends; nay, some of them were familiar frequenters of the building on which they were now miserably stranded. That the broker felt a certain satisfaction in being instrumental in thus misleading his fellow-brokers no one acquainted with human nature will for a moment doubt. But a stronger pull on his line caused him to put forth all his strength and skill.

The magic pole bent like a coach-whip. The broker held firm, assisted by the battlements of the church. Again and again it was almost wrested from his hand, and again and again he slowly reeled in a portion of the tightening line. At last, with one mighty effort, he lifted to the level of the roof a struggling object. A howl like Pandemonium rang through the air as the broker successfully landed at his feet — the Devil himself!

The two glared fiercely at each other. The broker, perhaps mindful of his former treatment, evinced no haste to remove the hook from his antagonist's jaw. When it was finally accomplished, he asked quietly if the Devil was satisfied. That gentleman seemed absorbed in the contemplation of the bait which he had just taken from his mouth. "I am," he said, finally, "and forgive you; but what do you call this?"

"Bend low," replied the broker, as he buttoned up his coat ready to depart. The Devil inclined his ear. "I call it WILD CAT!"

THE OGRESS OF SILVER LAND;

OR,

THE DIVERTING HISTORY OF PRINCE BADFELLAH AND PRINCE BULLEBOYE.

IN the second year of the reign of the renowned Caliph Lo there dwelt in SILVER LAND, adjoining his territory, a certain terrible ogress. She lived in the bowels of a dismal mountain, where she was in the habit of confining such unfortunate travellers as ventured within her domain. The country for miles around was sterile and barren. In some places it was covered with a white powder, which was called in the language of the country AL KA LI, and was supposed to be the pulverized bones of those who had perished miserably in her service.

In spite of this, every year, great numbers of young men devoted themselves to the service of the ogress, hoping to become her godsons, and to enjoy the good fortune which belonged to that privileged class. For these godsons had no work to perform, neither at the mountain nor elsewhere, but roamed about the world with credentials of their relationship in their pockets, which they called STOKH,

which was stamped with the stamp and sealed with the seal of the ogress, and which enabled them at the end of each moon to draw large quantities of gold and silver from her treasury. And the wisest and most favored of those godsons were the Princes BADFELLAH and BULLEBOYE. They knew all the secrets of the ogress, and how to wheedle and coax her. They were also the favorites of SOOPAH INTENDENT, who was her Lord High Chamberlain and Prime Minister, and who dwelt in SILVER LAND.

One day, SOOPAH INTENDENT said to his servants, "What is that which travels the most surely, the most secretly, and the most swiftly?"

And they all answered as one man, "LIGHTNING, my lord, travels the most surely, the most swiftly, and the most secretly!"

Then said SOOPAH INTENDENT, "Let Lightning carry this message secretly, swiftly, and surely to my beloved friends the Princes BADFELLAH and BULLEBOYE, and tell them that their godmother is dying, and bid them seek some other godmother or sell their STOKH ere it becomes *badjee*, — worthless."

"Bekhesm! On our heads be it!" answered the servants; and they ran to Lightning with the message, who flew with it to the City by the Sea, and delivered it, even at that moment, into the hands of the Princes BADFELLAH and BULLEBOYE.

Now the Prince BADFELLAH was a wicked young man; and when he had received this message he tore his beard and rent his garment and reviled his godmother, and his friend SOOPAH INTENDENT. But presently he arose, and dressed himself in his finest stuffs, and went forth into the bazaars and among the merchants, capering and dancing as he walked, and crying in a loud voice, "O, happy day! O, day worthy to be marked with a white stone!"

This he said cunningly, thinking the merchants and men of the bazaars would gather about him, which they presently did, and began to question him: "What news, O most worthy and serene Highness? Tell us, that we make merry too!"

Then replied the cunning prince, "Good news, O my brothers, for I have heard this day that my godmother in SILVER LAND is well." The merchants, who were not aware of the substance of the real message, envied him greatly, and said one to another: "Surely our brother the Prince BADFELLAH is favored by Allah above all men"; and they were about to retire, when the prince checked them, saying: "Tarry for a moment. Here are my credentials, or STOKH. The same I will sell you for fifty thousand sequins, for I have to give a feast to-day, and need much gold. Who will give fifty thousand?" And he again fell to capering and dancing. But this time the merchants drew

a little apart, and some of the oldest and wisest said: "What dirt is this which the prince would have us swallow? If his godmother were well, why should he sell his STOKH? Bismillah! The olives are old and the jar is broken!" When Prince BADFELLAH perceived them whispering, his countenance fell, and his knees smote against each other through fear; but, dissembling again, he said: "Well, so be it! Lo, I have much more than shall abide with me, for my days are many and my wants are few. Say forty thousand sequins for my STOKH and let me depart in Allah's name. Who will give forty thousand sequins to become the godson of such a healthy mother?" And he again fell to capering and dancing, but not as gayly as before, for his heart was troubled. The merchants, however, only moved farther away. "Thirty thousand sequins," cried Prince BADFELLAH; but even as he spoke they fled before his face, crying: "His godmother is dead. Lo, the jackals are defiling her grave. Mashalla! he has no godmother." And they sought out PANIK, the swift-footed messenger, and bade him shout through the bazaars that the godmother of Prince BADFELLAH was dead. When he heard this, the prince fell upon his face, and rent his garments, and covered himself with the dust of the market-place. As he was sitting thus, a porter passed him with jars of wine on his shoulders, and the prince begged him to give him a jar,

for he was exceeding thirsty and faint. But the porter said, "What will my lord give me first?" And the prince, in very bitterness of spirit, said, "Take this," and handed him his STOKH, and so exchanged it for a jar of wine.

Now the Prince BULLEBOYE was of a very different disposition. When he received the message of SOOPAH INTENDENT he bowed his head, and said, "It is the will of God." Then he rose, and without speaking a word entered the gates of his palace. But his wife, the peerless MAREE JAHANN, perceiving the gravity of his countenance, said, "Why is my lord cast down and silent? Why are those rare and priceless pearls, his words, shut up so tightly between those gorgeous oyster-shells, his lips?" But to this he made no reply. Thinking further to divert him, she brought her lute into the chamber and stood before him, and sang the song and danced the dance of BEN KOTTON, which is called IBRAHIM'S DAUGHTER, but she could not lift the veil of sadness from his brow.

When she had ceased, the Prince BULLEBOYE arose and said, "Allah is great, and what am I, his servant, but the dust of the earth! Lo, this day has my godmother sickened unto death, and my STOKH become as a withered palm-leaf. Call hither my servants and camel-drivers, and the merchants that have furnished me with stuffs, and the beggars who have feasted at my table, and bid them

take all that is here, for it is mine no longer!" With these words he buried his face in his mantle and wept aloud.

But MAREE JAHANN, his wife, plucked him by the sleeve. "Prithee, my lord," said she, "bethink thee of the BROKAH or scrivener, who besought thee but yesterday to share thy STOKH with him and gave thee his bond for fifty thousand sequins." But the noble Prince BULLEBOYE, raising his head, said: "Shall I sell to him for fifty thousand sequins that which I know is not worth a SOO MARKEE? For is not all the BROKAH'S wealth, even his wife and children, pledged on that bond? Shall I ruin him to save myself? Allah forbid! Rather let me eat the salt fish of honest penury, than the kibobs of dishonorable affluence; rather let me wallow in the mire of virtuous oblivion, than repose on the divan of luxurious wickedness."

When the prince had given utterance to this beautiful and edifying sentiment, a strain of gentle music was heard, and the rear wall of the apartment, which had been ingeniously constructed like a flat, opened and discovered the Ogress of SILVER LAND in the glare of blue fire, seated on a triumphal car attached to two ropes which were connected with the flies, in the very act of blessing the unconscious prince. When the walls closed again without attracting his attention, Prince BULLEBOYE

arose, dressed himself in his coarsest and cheapest stuffs, and sprinkled ashes on his head, and in this guise, having embraced his wife, went forth into the bazaars. In this it will be perceived how differently the good Prince BULLEBOYE acted from the wicked Prince BADFELLAH, who put on his gayest garments to simulate and deceive.

Now when Prince BULLEBOYE entered the chief bazaar, where the merchants of the city were gathered in council, he stood up in his accustomed place, and all that were there held their breath, for the noble Prince BULLEBOYE was much respected. "Let the BROKAH, whose bond I hold for fifty thousand sequins, stand forth!" said the prince. And the BROKAH stood forth from among the merchants. Then said the prince: "Here is thy bond for fifty thousand sequins, for which I was to deliver unto thee one half of my STOKH. Know, then, O my brother, — and thou, too, O Aga of the BROKAHS, — that this my STOKH which I pledged to thee is worthless. For my godmother, the Ogress of SILVER LAND, is dying. Thus do I release thee from thy bond, and from the poverty which might overtake thee as it has even me, thy brother, the Prince BULLEBOYE." And with that the noble Prince BULLEBOYE tore the bond of the BROKAH into pieces and scattered it to the four winds.

Now when the prince tore up the bond there was a great commotion, and some said, "Surely the

Prince BULLEBOYE is drunken with wine"; and others, "He is possessed of an evil spirit"; and his friends expostulated with him, saying, "What thou hast done is not the custom of the bazaars, — behold, it is not BIZ!" But to all the prince answered gravely, "It is right; on my own head be it!"

But the oldest and wisest of the merchants, they who had talked with Prince BADFELLAH the same morning, whispered together, and gathered around the BROKAH whose bond the Prince BULLEBOYE had torn up. "Hark ye," said they, "our brother the Prince BULLEBOYE is cunning as a jackal. What bosh is this about ruining himself to save thee? Such a thing was never heard before in the bazaars. It is a trick, O thou mooncalf of a BROKAH! Dost thou not see that he has heard good news from his godmother, the same that was even now told us by the Prince BADFELLAH, his confederate, and that he would destroy thy bond for fifty thousand sequins because his STOKH is worth a hundred thousand! Be not deceived, O too credulous BROKAH! for this what our brother the prince doeth is not in the name of ALLAH, but of BIZ, the only god known in the bazaars of the city."

When the foolish BROKAH heard these things he cried, "Justice, O Aga of the BROKAHS, — justice and the fulfilment of my bond! Let the prince deliver unto me the STOKH. Here are my fifty

thousand sequins." But the prince said, "Have I not told that my godmother is dying, and that my STOKH is valueless?" At this the BROKAH only clamored the more for justice and the fulfilment of his bond. Then the Aga of the BROKAHS said, "Since the bond is destroyed, behold thou hast no claim. Go thy ways!" But the BROKAH again cried, "Justice, my lord Aga! Behold, I offer the prince seventy thousand sequins for his STOKH!" But the prince said, "It is not worth one sequin!" Then the Aga said, "Bismillah! I cannot understand this. Whether thy godmother be dead, or dying, or immortal, does not seem to signify. Therefore, O prince, by the laws of BIZ and of ALLAH, thou art released. Give the BROKAH thy STOKH for seventy thousand sequins, and bid him depart in peace. On his own head be it!" When the prince heard this command, he handed his STOKH to the BROKAH, who counted out to him seventy thousand sequins. But the heart of the virtuous prince did not rejoice, nor did the BROKAH, when he found his STOKH was valueless; but the merchants lifted their hands in wonder at the sagacity and wisdom of the famous Prince BULLEBOYE. For none would believe that it was the law of ALLAH that the prince followed, and not the rules of BIZ.

THE RUINS OF SAN FRANCISCO.

TOWARDS the close of the nineteenth century the city of San Francisco was totally ingulfed by an earthquake. Although the whole coast-line must have been much shaken, the accident seems to have been purely local, and even the city of Oakland escaped. Schwappelfurt, the celebrated German geologist, has endeavored to explain this singular fact by suggesting that there are some things the earth cannot swallow, — a statement that should be received with some caution, as exceeding the latitude of ordinary geological speculation.

Historians disagree in the exact date of the calamity. Tulu Krish, the well-known New-Zealander, whose admirable speculations on the ruins of St. Paul as seen from London Bridge have won for him the attentive consideration of the scientific world, fixes the occurrence in A. D. 1880. This, supposing the city to have been actually founded in 1850, as asserted, would give but thirty years for it to have assumed the size and proportions it had evidently attained at the time of its destruction. It is not our purpose, however, to

question the conclusions of the justly famed Maorian philosopher. Our present business lies with the excavations that are now being prosecuted by order of the Hawaiian government upon the site of the lost city.

Every one is familiar with the story of its discovery. For many years the bay of San Francisco had been famed for the luscious quality of its oysters. It is stated that a dredger one day raked up a large bell, which proved to belong to the City Hall, and led to the discovery of the cupola of that building. The attention of the government was at once directed to the spot. The bay of San Francisco was speedily drained by a system of patent siphons, and the city, deeply embedded in mud, brought to light after a burial of many centuries. The City Hall, Post-Office, Mint, and Custom-House were readily recognized by the large full-fed barnacles which adhered to their walls. Shortly afterwards the first skeleton was discovered; that of a broker, whose position in the upper strata of mud nearer the surface was supposed to be owing to the exceeding buoyancy or inflation of scrip which he had secured about his person while endeavoring to escape. Many skeletons, supposed to be those of females, encompassed in that peculiar steel coop or cage which seems to have been worn by the women of that period, were also found in the upper stratum. Alexis

von Puffer, in his admirable work on San Francisco, accounts for the position of these unfortunate creatures by asserting that the steel cage was originally the frame of a parachute-like garment which distended the skirt, and in the submersion of the city prevented them from sinking. "If anything," says Von Puffer, "could have been wanting to add intensity to the horrible catastrophe which took place as the waters first entered the city, it would have been furnished in the forcible separation of the sexes at this trying moment. Buoyed up by their peculiar garments, the female population instantly ascended to the surface. As the drowning husband turned his eyes above, what must have been his agony as he saw his wife shooting upward, and knew that he was debarred the privilege of perishing with her? To the lasting honor of the male inhabitants, be it said that but few seemed to have availed themselves of their wives' superior levity. Only one skeleton was found still grasping the ankles of another in their upward journey to the surface."

For many years California had been subject to slight earthquakes, more or less generally felt, but not of sufficient importance to awaken anxiety or fear. Perhaps the absorbing nature of the San-Franciscans' pursuits of gold-getting, which metal seems to have been valuable in those days, and actually used as a medium of currency, rendered

the inhabitants reckless of all other matters. Everything tends to show that the calamity was totally unlooked for. We quote the graphic language of Schwappelfurt:—

"The morning of the tremendous catastrophe probably dawned upon the usual restless crowd of gold-getters intent upon their several avocations. The streets were filled with the expanded figures of gayly dressed women, acknowledging with coy glances the respectful salutations of beaux as they gracefully raised their remarkable cylindrical head-coverings, a model of which is still preserved in the Honolulu Museum. The brokers had gathered at their respective temples. The shopmen were exhibiting their goods. The idlers, or 'Bummers,' — a term applied to designate an aristocratic, privileged class who enjoyed immunities from labor, and from whom a majority of the rulers are chosen, — were listlessly regarding the promenaders from the street-corners or the doors of their bibulous temples. A slight premonitory thrill runs through the city. The busy life of this restless microcosm is arrested. The shopkeeper pauses as he elevates the goods to bring them into a favorable light, and the glib professional recommendation sticks on his tongue. In the drinking-saloon the glass is checked half-way to the lips; on the streets the promenaders pause. Another thrill, and the city begins to go down, a

few of the more persistent topers tossing off their liquor at the same moment. Beyond a terrible sensation of nausea, the crowds who now throng the streets do not realize the extent of the catastrophe. The waters of the bay recede at first from the centre of depression, assuming a concave shape, the outer edge of the circle towering many thousand feet above the city. Another convulsion, and the water instantly resumes its level. The city is smoothly ingulfed nine thousand feet below, and the regular swell of the Pacific calmly rolls over it. Terrible," says Schwappelfurt, in conclusion, "as the calamity must have been, in direct relation to the individuals immediately concerned therein, we cannot but admire its artistic management; the division of the catastrophe into three periods, the completeness of the cataclysms, and the rare combination of sincerity of intention with felicity of execution."

A NIGHT AT WINGDAM.

I HAD been stage-ridden and bewildered all day, and when we swept down with the darkness into the Arcadian hamlet of "Wingdam," I resolved to go no farther, and rolled out in a gloomy and dyspeptic state. The effects of a mysterious pie, and some sweetened carbonic acid known to the proprietor of the "Half-Way House" as "lemming sody," still oppressed me. Even the facetiæ of the gallant expressman who knew everybody's Christian name along the route, who rained letters, newspapers, and bundles from the top of the stage, whose legs frequently appeared in frightful proximity to the wheels, who got on and off while we were going at full speed, whose gallantry, energy, and superior knowledge of travel crushed all us other passengers to envious silence, and who just then was talking with several persons and manifestly doing something else at the same time, — even this had failed to interest me. So I stood gloomily, clutching my shawl and carpet-bag, and watched the stage roll away, taking a parting look at the gallant expressman as he hung on the top rail with one leg, and lit his cigar from the pipe of a running

footman. I then turned toward the Wingdam Temperance Hotel.

It may have been the weather, or it may have been the pie, but I was not impressed favorably with the house. Perhaps it was the name extending the whole length of the building, with a letter under each window, making the people who looked out dreadfully conspicuous. Perhaps it was that "Temperance" always suggested to my mind rusks and weak tea. It was uninviting. It might have been called the "Total Abstinence" Hotel, from the lack of anything to intoxicate or inthrall the senses. It was designed with an eye to artistic dreariness. It was so much too large for the settlement, that it appeared to be a very slight improvement on out-doors. It was unpleasantly new. There was the forest flavor of dampness about it, and a slight spicing of pine. Nature outraged, but not entirely subdued, sometimes broke out afresh in little round, sticky, resinous tears on the doors and windows. It seemed to me that boarding there must seem like a perpetual picnic. As I entered the door, a number of the regular boarders rushed out of a long room, and set about trying to get the taste of something out of their mouths, by the application of tobacco in various forms. A few immediately ranged themselves around the fireplace, with their legs over each other's chairs, and in that position silently resigned themselves to indigestion.

Remembering the pie, I waived the invitation of the landlord to supper, but suffered myself to be conducted into the sitting-room. "Mine host" was a magnificent-looking, heavily bearded specimen of the animal man. He reminded me of somebody or something connected with the drama. I was sitting beside the fire, mutely wondering what it could be, and trying to follow the particular chord of memory thus touched, into the intricate past, when a little delicate-looking woman appeared at the door, and, leaning heavily against the casing, said in an exhausted tone, "Husband!" As the landlord turned toward her, that particular remembrance flashed before me in a single line of blank verse. It was this: "Two souls with but one single thought, two hearts that beat as one."

It was Ingomar and Parthenia his wife. I imagined a different *dénouement* from the play. Ingomar had taken Parthenia back to the mountains, and kept a hotel for the benefit of the Alemanni, who resorted there in large numbers. Poor Parthenia was pretty well fagged out, and did all the work without "help." She had two "young barbarians," a boy and a girl. She was faded, but still good-looking.

I sat and talked with Ingomar, who seemed perfectly at home and told me several stories of the Alemanni, all bearing a strong flavor of the wilderness, and being perfectly in keeping with the house.

How he, Ingomar, had killed a certain dreadful "bar," whose skin was just up "yar," over his bed. How he, Ingomar, had killed several "bucks," whose skins had been prettily fringed and embroidered by Parthenia, and even now clothed him. How he, Ingomar, had killed several "Injins," and was once nearly scalped himself. All this with that ingenious candor which is perfectly justifiable in a barbarian, but which a Greek might feel inclined to look upon as "blowing." Thinking of the wearied Parthenia, I began to consider for the first time that perhaps she had better married the old Greek. Then she would at least have always looked neat. Then she would not have worn a woollen dress flavored with all the dinners of the past year. Then she would not have been obliged to wait on the table with her hair half down. Then the two children would not have hung about her skirts with dirty fingers, palpably dragging her down day by day. I suppose it was the pie which put such heartless and improper ideas in my head, and so I rose up and told Ingomar I believed I'd go to bed. Preceded by that redoubtable barbarian and a flaring tallow candle, I followed him up stairs to my room. It was the only single room he had, he told me; he had built it for the convenience of married parties who might stop here, but, that event not happening yet, he had left it half furnished. It had cloth on one side, and large

cracks on the other. The wind, which always swept over Wingdam at night-time, puffed through the apartment from different apertures. The window was too small for the hole in the side of the house where it hung, and rattled noisily. Everything looked cheerless and dispiriting. Before Ingomar left me, he brought that "bar-skin," and throwing it over the solemn bier which stood in one corner, told me he reckoned that would keep me warm, and then bade me good night. I undressed myself, the light blowing out in the middle of that ceremony, crawled under the "bar-skin," and tried to compose myself to sleep.

But I was staringly wide awake. I heard the wind sweep down the mountain-side, and toss the branches of the melancholy pine, and then enter the house, and try all the doors along the passage. Sometimes strong currents of air blew my hair all over the pillow, as with strange whispering breaths. The green timber along the walls seemed to be sprouting, and sent a dampness even through the "bar-skin." I felt like Robinson Crusoe in his tree, with the ladder pulled up, — or like the rocked baby of the nursery song. After lying awake half an hour, I regretted having stopped at Wingdam; at the end of the third quarter, I wished I had not gone to bed; and when a restless hour passed, I got up and dressed myself. There had been a fire down in the big room. Perhaps it

was still burning. I opened the door and groped my way along the passage, vocal with the snores of the Alemanni and the whistling of the night wind; I partly fell down stairs, and at last entering the big room, saw the fire still burning. I drew a chair toward it, poked it with my foot, and was astonished to see, by the upspringing flash, that Parthenia was sitting there also, holding a faded-looking baby.

I asked her why she was sitting up.

"She did not go to bed on Wednesday night before the mail arrived, and then she awoke her husband, and there were passengers to 'tend to."

"Did she not get tired sometimes?"

"A little, but Abner" (the barbarian's Christian name) "had promised to get her more help next spring, if business was good."

"How many boarders had she?"

"She believed about forty came to regular meals, and there was transient custom, which was as much as she and her husband could 'tend to. But *he* did a great deal of work."

"What work?"

"O, bringing in the wood, and looking after the traders' things."

"How long had she been married?"

"About nine years. She had lost a little girl and boy. Three children living. *He* was from Illinois. She from Boston. Had an education

(Boston Female High School, — Geometry, Algebra, a little Latin and Greek). Mother and father died. Came to Illinois alone, to teach school Saw *him* — yes — a love match." ("Two souls," etc., etc.) "Married and emigrated to Kansas. Thence across the Plains to California. Always on the outskirts of civilization. *He* liked it.

"She might sometimes have wished to go home. Would like to on account of her children. Would like to give them an education. Had taught them a little herself, but could n't do much on account of other work. Hoped that the boy would be like his father, strong and hearty. Was fearful the girl would be more like her. Had often thought she was not fit for a pioneer's wife."

"Why?"

"O, she was not strong enough, and had seen some of his friends' wives in Kansas who could do more work. But he never complained, — he was so kind." ("Two souls," etc.)

Sitting there with her head leaning pensively on one hand, holding the poor, wearied, and limp-looking baby wearily on the other arm, dirty, drabbled, and forlorn, with the firelight playing upon her features no longer fresh or young, but still refined and delicate, and even in her grotesque slovenliness still bearing a faint reminiscence of birth and breeding, it was not to be wondered that I did not fall into excessive raptures over the bar-

barian's kindness. Emboldened by my sympathy, she told me how she had given up, little by little, what she imagined to be the weakness of her early education, until she found that she acquired but little strength in her new experience. How, translated to a backwoods society, she was hated by the women, and called proud and "fine," and how her dear husband lost popularity on that account with his fellows. How, led partly by his roving instincts, and partly from other circumstances, he started with her to California. An account of that tedious journey. How it was a dreary, dreary waste in her memory, only a blank plain marked by a little cairn of stones, — a child's grave. How she had noticed that little Willie failed. How she had called Abner's attention to it, but, man-like, he knew nothing about children, and pooh-poohed it, and was worried by the stock. How it happened that after they had passed Sweetwater, she was walking beside the wagon one night, and looking at the western sky, and she heard a little voice say "Mother." How she looked into the wagon and saw that little Willie was sleeping comfortably and did not wish to wake him. How that in a few moments more she heard the same voice saying "Mother." How she came back to the wagon and leaned down over him, and felt his breath upon her face, and again covered him up tenderly, and once more resumed her weary journey beside

him, praying to God for his recovery. How with her face turned to the sky she heard the same voice saying "Mother," and directly a great bright star shot away from its brethren and expired. And how she knew what had happened, and ran to the wagon again only to pillow a little pinched and cold white face upon her weary bosom. The thin red hands went up to her eyes here, and for a few moments she sat still. The wind tore round the house and made a frantic rush at the front door, and from his couch of skins in the inner room — Ingomar, the barbarian, snored peacefully.

"Of course she always found a protector from insult and outrage in the great courage and strength of her husband?"

"O yes; when Ingomar was with her she feared nothing. But she was nervous and had been frightened once!"

"How?"

"They had just arrived in California. They kept house then, and had to sell liquor to traders. Ingomar was hospitable, and drank with everybody, for the sake of popularity and business, and Ingomar got to like liquor, and was easily affected by it. And how one night there was a boisterous crowd in the bar-room; she went in and tried to get him away, but only succeeded in awakening the coarse gallantry of the half-crazed revellers. And how, when she had at last got him in the

room with her frightened children, he sank down on the bed in a stupor, which made her think the liquor was drugged. And how she sat beside him all night, and near morning heard a step in the passage, and, looking toward the door, saw the latch slowly moving up and down, as if somebody were trying it. And how she shook her husband, and tried to waken him, but without effect. And how at last the door yielded slowly at the top (it was bolted below), as if by a gradual pressure without; and how a hand protruded through the opening. And how as quick as lightning she nailed that hand to the wall with her scissors (her only weapon), but the point broke, and somebody got away with a fearful oath. How she never told her husband of it, for fear he would kill that somebody; but how on one day a stranger called here, and as she was handing him his coffee, she saw a queer triangular scar on the back of his hand."

She was still talking, and the wind was still blowing, and Ingomar was still snoring from his couch of skins, when there was a shout high up the straggling street, and a clattering of hoofs, and rattling of wheels. The mail had arrived. Parthenia ran with the faded baby to awaken Ingomar, and almost simultaneously the gallant expressman stood again before me addressing me by my Christian name, and inviting me to drink out of a mysterious black bottle. The horses were

speedily watered, and the business of the gallant expressman concluded, and, bidding Parthenia good by, I got on the stage, and immediately fell asleep, and dreamt of calling on Parthenia and Ingomar, and being treated with pie to an unlimited extent, until I woke up the next morning in Sacramento. I have some doubts as to whether all this was not a dyspeptic dream, but I never witness the drama, and hear that noble sentiment concerning "Two souls," etc., without thinking of Wingdam and poor Parthenia.

THE END.

THE STORY OF A MINE

THE STORY OF A MINE.

CHAPTER I.

WHO SOUGHT IT.

It was a steep trail leading over the Monterey Coast Range. Concho was very tired, Concho was very dusty, Concho was very much disgusted. To Concho's mind there was but one relief for these insurmountable difficulties, and that lay in a leathern bottle slung over the *machillas* of his saddle. Concho raised the bottle to his lips, took a long draught, made a wry face, and ejaculated:

"Carajo!"

It appeared that the bottle did not contain *aguardiente*, but had lately been filled in a tavern near *Tres Pinos* by an Irishman who sold bad American whisky under that pleasing Castilian title. Nevertheless Concho had already nearly emptied the bottle, and it fell back against the saddle as yellow and flaccid as his own cheeks. Thus reinforced Concho turned

to look at the valley behind him, from which he had climbed since noon. It was a sterile waste bordered here and there by arable fringes and *valdas* of meadow land, but in the main dusty, dry, and forbidding. His eye rested for a moment on a low white cloud line on the eastern horizon, but so mocking and unsubstantial that it seemed to come and go as he gazed. Concho struck his forehead and winked his hot eyelids. Was it the Sierras or the cursed American whisky?

Again he recommenced the ascent. At times the half-worn, half-visible trail became utterly lost in the bare black out-crop of the ridge, but his sagacious mule soon found it again, until, stepping upon a loose boulder, she slipped and fell. In vain Concho tried to lift her from out the ruin of camp kettles, prospecting pans, and picks; she remained quietly recumbent, occasionally raising her head as if to contemplatively glance over the arid plain below. Then he had recourse to useless blows. Then he essayed profanity of a secular kind, such as "Assassin," "Thief," "Beast with a pig's head," "Food for the Bull's Horns," but with no effect.

Then he had recourse to the curse ecclesiastic:

"Ah, Judas Iscariot! is it thus, renegade and traitor, thou leavest me, thy master, a league from camp and supper waiting? Stealer of the Sacrament, get up!"

Still no effect. Concho began to feel uneasy; never before had a mule of pious lineage failed to respond to this kind of exhortation. He made one more desperate attempt:

"Ah, defiler of the altar! lie not there! Look!" he threw his hand into the air, extending the fingers suddenly. "Behold, fiend! I exorcise thee! Ha! tremblest! Look but a little now,—see! Apostate! I—I—excommunicate thee,—*Mula!*"

"What are you kicking up such a devil of row down there for?" said a gruff voice from the rocks above.

Concho shuddered. Could it be that the devil was really going to fly away with his mule. He dared not look up.

"Come now," continued the voice, "you just let up on that mule, you d——d old Greaser. Do n't you see she 's slipped her shoulder?"

Alarmed as Concho was at the information, he could not help feeling to a certain extent relieved. She was lamed, but had not lost her standing as a good Catholic.

He ventured to lift his eyes. A stranger—an *Americano* from his dress and accent—was descending the rocks toward him. He was a slight-built man with a dark, smooth face, that would have been quite commonplace and inexpressive but for his left eye, in

which all that was villainous in him apparently centered. Shut that eye, and you had the features and expression of an ordinary man; cover up those features, and the eye shone out like Eblis's own. Nature had apparently observed this too, and had, by a paralysis of the nerve, ironically dropped the corner of the upper lid over it like a curtain, laughed at her handiwork, and turned him loose to prey upon a credulous world.

"What are you doing here?" said the stranger after he had assisted Concho in bringing the mule to her feet, and a helpless halt.

"Prospecting, Senor."

The stranger turned his respectable right eye toward Concho, while his left looked unutterable scorn and wickedness over the landscape.

"Prospecting, what for?"

"Gold and silver, Senor,—yet for silver most."

"Alone?"

"Of us there are four."

The stranger looked around.

"In camp,—— a league beyond," explained the Mexican.

"Found anything?"

"Of this—much." Concho took from his saddle bags a lump of greyish iron ore, studded here and there with star points of pyrites. The stranger said nothing, but his eye looked a diabolical suggestion.

"You are lucky, friend Greaser."

"Eh?"

"It *is* silver."

"How know you this?"

"It is my business. I 'm a metallurgist."

"And you can say what shall be silver and what is not."

"Yes,—see here!" The stranger took from his saddle bags a little leather case containing some half dozen phials. One, enwrapped in dark-blue paper, he held up to Concho.

"This contains a preparation of silver."

Concho's eyes sparkled, but he looked doubtingly at the stranger.

"Get me some water in your pan."

Concho emptied his water bottle in his prospecting pan and handed it to the stranger. He dipped a dried blade of grass in the bottle and then let a drop fall from its tip in the water. The water remained unchanged.

"Now throw a little salt in the water," said the stranger.

Concho did so. Instantly a white film appeared on the surface, and presently the whole mass assumed a milky hue.

Concho crossed himself hastily, "Mother of God, it is magic!"

"It is chloride of silver, you darned fool."

Not content with this cheap experiment, the stranger then took Concho's breath away by reddening some litmus paper with the nitrate, and then completely knocked over the simple Mexican by restoring its color by dipping it in the salt water.

"You shall try me this" said Concho, offering his iron ore to the stranger;—"you shall use the silver and the salt."

"Not so fast my friend," answered the stranger; "in the first place this ore must be melted, and then a chip taken and put in shape like this,—and that is worth something, my Greaser cherub. No, sir, a man do n't spend all his youth at Freiburg and Heidelburg to throw away his science gratuitously on the first Greaser he meets."

"It will cost—eh—how much?" said the Mexican eagerly.

"Well, I should say it would take about a hundred dollars and expenses to—to—find silver in that ore. But once you've got it there—you're all right for tons of it."

"You shall have it," said the now excited Mexican. "You shall have it of us,—the four! You shall come to our camp and shall melt it,—and show the silver, and—enough! Come!" and in his feverishness he clutched the hand of his companion as if to lead him forth at once.

"What are you going to do with your mule?" said the stranger.

"True, Holy Mother,—what, indeed?"

"Look yer," said the stranger, with a grim smile, "she won't stray far, I'll be bound. I've an extra pack mule above here; you can ride on her, and lead me into camp, and tomorrow come back for your beast."

Poor honest Concho's heart sickened at the prospect of leaving behind the tired servant he had objurgated so strongly a moment before, but the love of gold was uppermost. "I will come back to thee, little one, tomorrow, a rich man. Meanwhile, wait thou here, patient one,—*Adios!*—thou smallest of mules,—*Adios!*"

And, seizing the stranger's hand, he clambered up the rocky ledge until they reached the summit. Then the stranger turned and gave one sweep of his malevolent eye over the valley.

Wherefore, in after years, when their story was related, with the devotion of true Catholic pioneers, they named the mountain '*La Canada de la Visitacion del Diablo*,' 'The Gulch of the Visitation of the Devil,' the same being now the boundary lines of one of the famous Mexican land grants.

CHAPTER II.

WHO FOUND IT.

Concho was so impatient to reach the camp and deliver his good news to his companions that more than once the stranger was obliged to command him to slacken his pace. "Is it not enough, you infernal Greaser, that you lame your own mule, but you must try your hand on mine? Or am I to put Jinny down among the expenses?" he added with a grin and a slight lifting of his baleful eyelid.

When they had ridden a mile along the ridge, they began to descend again toward the valley. Vegetation now sparingly bordered the trail, clumps of *chemisal*, an occasional manzanita bush, and one or two dwarfed 'buckeyes' rooted their way between the interstices of the black-grey rock. Now and then, in crossing some dry gully, worn by the overflow of winter torrents from above, the greyish rock gloom was relieved by dull red and brown masses of color, and almost every overhanging rock bore the mark of a miner's pick. Presently, as they rounded the curv-

ing flank of the mountain, from a rocky bench below them, a thin ghost-like stream of smoke seemed to be steadily drawn by invisible hands into the invisible ether. "It is the camp," said Concho, gleefully; "I will myself forward to prepare them for the stranger," and before his companion could detain him, he had disappeared at a sharp canter around the curve of the trail.

Left to himself, the stranger took a more leisurely pace, which left him ample time for reflection. Scamp as he was, there was something in the simple credulity of poor Concho that made him uneasy. Not that his moral consciousness was touched, but he feared that Concho's companions might, knowing Concho's simplicity, instantly suspect him of trading upon it. He rode on in a deep study. Was he reviewing his past life? A vagabond by birth and education, a swindler by profession, an outcast by reputation, without absolutely turning his back upon respectability, he had trembled on the perilous edge of criminality ever since his boyhood. He did not scruple to cheat these Mexicans,— they were a degraded race,— and for a moment he felt almost an accredited agent of progress and civilization. We never really understand the meaning of enlightenment until we begin to use it aggressively.

A few paces further on four figures appeared in the

now gathering darkness of the trail. The stranger quickly recognized the beaming smile of Concho, foremost of the party. A quick glance at the faces of the others satisfied him that while they lacked Concho's good humor, they certainly did not surpass him in intellect. 'Pedro' was a stout *vaquero*. 'Manuel' was a slim half-breed and ex-convert of the Mission of San Carmel, and 'Miguel' a recent butcher of Monterey. Under the benign influences of Concho that suspicion with which the ignorant regard strangers died away, and the whole party escorted the stranger — who had given his name as Mr. Joseph Wiles — to their camp-fire. So anxious were they to begin their experiments that even the instincts of hospitality were forgotten, and it was not until Mr. Wiles — now known as 'Don Jose' — sharply reminded them that he wanted some 'grub,' that they came to their senses. When the frugal meal of *tortillas*, *frijoles*, salt pork, and chocolate was over, an oven was built of the dark-red rock brought from the ledge before them, and an earthenware jar, glazed by some peculiar local process, tightly fitted over it, and packed with clay and sods. A fire was speedily built of pine boughs continually brought from a wooded ravine below, and in a few moments the furnace was in full blast. Mr. Wiles did not participate in these active preparations, except to give occasional directions between his teeth, which

were contemplatively fixed over a clay pipe as he lay comfortably on his back on the ground. Whatever enjoyment the rascal may have had in their useless labors he did not show it, but it was observed that his left eye often followed the broad figure of the ex-vaquero, Pedro, and often dwelt on that worthy's beetling brows and half-savage face. Meeting that baleful glance once, Pedro growled out an oath, but could not resist a hideous fascination that caused him again and again to seek it.

The scene was weird enough without Wiles's eye to add to its wild picturesqueness. The mountain towered above,—a heavy Rembrandtish mass of black shadow,—sharply cut here and there against a sky so inconceivably remote that the world-sick soul must have despaired of ever reaching so far, or of climbing its steel-blue walls. The stars were large, keen, and brilliant, but cold and steadfast. They did not dance nor twinkle in their adamantine setting. The furnace fire painted the faces of the men an Indian red, glanced on brightly colored blanket and *serapé*, but was eventually caught and absorbed in the waiting shadows of the black mountain, scarcely twenty feet from the furnace door. The low, half-sung, half-whispered foreign speech of the group, the roaring of the furnace, and the quick, sharp yelp of a *coyote* on the plain below were the only sounds that broke the awful silence of the hills.

It was almost dawn when it was announced that the ore had fused. And it was high time, for the pot was slowly sinking into the fast-crumbling oven. Con cho uttered a jubilant "God and Liberty," but Don Jose Wiles bade him be silent and bring stakes to support the pot. Then Don Jose bent over the seething mass. It was for a moment only. But in that moment this accomplished metallurgist, Mr. Joseph Wiles, had quietly dropped a silver half dollar into the pot!

Then he charged them to keep up the fires and went to sleep — all but one eye.

Dawn came with dull beacon fires on the near hill tops, and, far in the East, roses over the Sierran snow. Birds twittering in the alder fringes a mile below, and the creaking of wagon wheels,— the wagon itself a mere cloud of dust in the distant road,— were heard distinctly. Then the melting pot was solemnly broken by Don Jose, and the glowing incandescent mass turned into the road to cool.

And then the metallurgist chipped a small fragment from the mass and pounded it, and chipped another smaller piece and pounded that, and then subjected it to acid, and then treated it to a salt bath which became at once milky,— and at last produced a white something, — *mirabile dictu!* — two cents' worth of silver!

Concho shouted with joy; the rest gazed at each other doubtingly and distrustfully; companions in poverty, they began to diverge and suspect each other in prosperity. Wiles's left eye glanced ironically from the one to the other.

"Here is the hundred dollars, Don Jose," said Pedro, handing the gold to Wiles with a decidedly brusque intimation that the services and presence of a stranger were no longer required.

Wiles took the money with a gracious smile and a wink that sent Pedro's heart into his boots, and was turning away, when a cry from Manuel stopped him. "The pot,— the pot,—it has leaked! look! behold! see!"

He had been cleaning away the crumbled fragments of the furnace to get ready for breakfast, and had disclosed a shining pool of *quicksilver!*

Wiles started, cast a rapid glance around the group, saw in a flash that the metal was unknown to them,— and then said quietly:

"It is not silver."

"Pardon, Senor, it is, and still molten."

Wiles stooped and ran his fingers through the shining metal.

"Mother of God,— what is it then? — magic?"

"No, only base metal." But here, Concho, emboldened by Wiles's experiment, attempted to seize a hand-

ful of the glistening mass, that instantly broke through his fingers in a thousand tiny spherules, and even sent a few globules up his shirt sleeves, until he danced around in mingled fear and childish pleasure.

"And it is not worth the taking?" queried Pedro of Wiles.

Wiles's right eye and bland face were turned toward the speaker, but his malevolent left was glancing at the dull red-brown rock on the hill side.

"No!"— and turning abruptly away, he proceeded to saddle his mule.

Manuel, Miguel, and Pedro, left to themselves, began talking earnestly together, while Concho, now mindful of his crippled mule, made his way back to the trail where he had left her. But she was no longer there. Constant to her master through beatings and bullyings, she could not stand incivility and inattention. There are certain qualities of the sex that belong to all animated nature.

Inconsolable, footsore, and remorseful, Concho returned to the camp and furnace, three miles across the rocky ridge. But what was his astonishment on arriving to find the place deserted of man, mule, and camp equipage. Concho called aloud. Only the echoing rocks grimly answered him. Was it a trick? Concho tried to laugh. Ah — yes — a good one,— a joke, — no — no — they *had* deserted him! And then poor

Concho bowed his head to the ground, and falling on his face, cried as if his honest heart would break.

The tempest passed in a moment; it was not Concho's nature to suffer long nor brood over an injury. As he raised his head again his eye caught the shimmer of the quicksilver,—that pool of merry antic metal that had so delighted him an hour before. In a few moments Concho was again disporting with it; chasing it here and there, rolling it in his palms and laughing with boy-like glee at its elusive freaks and fancies. "Ah, sprightly one,—skipjack,—there thou goest,—come here. This way,—now I have thee, little one,—come, *muchacha*,—come and kiss me," until he had quite forgotten the defection of his companions. And even when he shouldered his sorry pack, he was fain to carry his playmate away with him in his empty leathern flask.

And yet I fancy the sun looked kindly on him as he strode cheerily down the black mountain side, and his step was none the less free nor light that he carried with him neither the brilliant prospects nor the crime of his late comrades.

CHAPTER III.

WHO CLAIMED IT.

The fog had already closed in on Monterey, and was now rolling, a white, billowy sea above, that soon shut out the blue breakers below. Once or twice in descending the mountain Concho had overhung the cliff and looked down upon the curving horse-shoe of a bay below him, — distant yet many miles. Earlier in the afternoon he had seen the gilt cross on the white-faced Mission flare in the sunlight, but now all was gone. By the time he reached the highway of the town it was quite dark, and he plunged into the first *fonda* at the wayside, and endeavored to forget his woes and his weariness in *aguardiente*. But Concho's head ached, and his back ached, and he was so generally distressed that he bethought him of a *medico*, — an American doctor, — lately come into the town, who had once treated Concho and his mule with apparently the same medicine, and after the same heroic fashion. Concho reasoned, not illogically, that if he were to be physicked at all he ought to get the worth of his money.

The grotesque extravagance of life, of fruit and vegetables, in California was inconsistent with infinitesimal doses. In Concho's previous illness the doctor had given him a dozen 4 gr. quinine powders. The following day the grateful Mexican walked into the Doctor's office — cured. The Doctor was gratified until, on examination, it appeared that to save trouble, and because his memory was poor, Concho had taken all the powders in one dose. The Doctor shrugged his shoulders and — altered his practice.

"Well," said Dr. Guild, as Concho sank down exhaustedly in one of the Doctor's two chairs, "what now? Have you been sleeping again in the *tule* marshes, or are you upset with commissary whisky? Come, have it out."

But Concho declared that the devil was in his stomach, that Judas Iscariot had possessed himself of his spine, that imps were in his forehead, and that his feet had been scourged by Pontius Pilate.

"That means 'blue mass,'" said the Doctor. And gave it to him,— a bolus as large as a musket ball, and as heavy.

Concho took it on the spot, and turned to go.

"I have no money, Senor Medico."

"Never mind. It 's only a dollar, the price of the medicine."

Concho looked guilty at having gulped down so much cash. Then he said timidly:

"I have no money, but I have got here what is fine and jolly. It is yours." And he handed over the contents of the precious tin can he had brought with him.

The Doctor took it, looked at the shivering volatile mass and said, "Why, this is quicksilver!"

Concho laughed, "Yes, very quick silver, so!" and he snapped his fingers to show its sprightliness.

The Doctor's face grew earnest; "Where did you get this, Concho?" he finally asked.

"It ran from the pot in the mountains beyond."

The Doctor looked incredulous. Then Concho related the whole story.

"Could you find that spot again?"

"*Madre De Dios*, yes,—I have a mule there; may the devil fly away with her!"

"And you say your comrades saw this?"

"Why not?"

"And you say they afterwards left you,—deserted you?"

"They did, ingrates!"

The Doctor arose and shut his office door. "Hark ye, Concho," he said, "that bit of medicine I gave you just now was worth a dollar. It was worth a dollar because the material of which it was composed was made from the stuff you have in that can,—quicksilver or mercury. It is one of the most valuable of

metals, especially in a gold-mining country. My good fellow, if you know where to find enough of it, your fortune is made."

Concho rose to his feet.

"Tell me, was the rock you built your furnace of red?"

"*Si, Senor.*"

"And brown?"

"*Si, Senor.*"

"And crumbled under the heat?"

"As to nothing."

"And did you see much of this red rock?"

"The mountain mother is in travail with it."

"Are you sure that your comrades have not taken possession of the mountain mother?"

"As how?"

"By claiming its discovery under the mining laws, or by pre-emption?"

"They shall not."

"But how will you, single-handed, fight the four; for I doubt not your scientific friend has a hand in it?"

"I will fight."

"Yes, my Concho, but suppose I take the fight off your hands. Now, here 's a proposition: I will get half a dozen *Americanos* to go in with you. You will have to get money to work the mine,—you will need

funds. You shall share half with them. They will take the risk, raise the money, and protect you."

"I see," said Concho, nodding his head and winking his eyes rapidly. "*Bueno!*"

"I will return in ten minutes," said the Doctor, taking his hat.

He was as good as his word. In ten minutes he returned with six original locaters, a board of directors, a president, secretary, and a deed of incorporation of the 'Blue Mass Quicksilver Mining Co.' This latter was a delicate compliment to the Doctor, who was popular. The President added to these necessary articles a revolver.

"Take it," he said, handing over the weapon to Concho. "Take it; my horse is outside; take that, ride like h—l and hang on to the claim until we come!"

In another moment Concho was in the saddle. Then the mining director lapsed into the physician.

"I hardly know," said Dr. Guild, doubtfully, "if, in your present condition, you ought to travel. You have just taken a powerful medicine," and the Doctor looked hypocritically concerned.

"Ah,—the devil!" laughed Concho, "what is the quicksilver that is *in* to that which is *out*? *Hoopa, la Mula!*" and, with a clatter of hoofs and jingle of spurs, he was presently lost in the darkness.

"You were none too soon, gentlemen," said the

American *Alcalde*, as he drew up before the Doctor's door. "Another company has just been incorporated for the same location, I reckon."

"Who are they?"

"Three Mexicans,—Pedro, Manuel, and Miguel, headed by that d—d cock-eyed Sydney Duck, Wiles."

"Are they here?"

"Manuel and Miguel, only. The others are over at *Tres Pinos* lally-gaging Roscommon and trying to rope him in to pay off their whisky bills at his grocery."

"If that's so we need n't start before sun-rise, for they're sure to get roaring drunk."

And this legitimate successor of the grave Mexican *Alcaldes*, having thus delivered his impartial opinion, rode away.

Meanwhile, Concho the redoubtable, Concho the fortunate, spared neither *riata* nor spur. The way was dark, the trail obscure and at times even dangerous, and Concho, familiar as he was with these mountain fastnesses, often regretted his sure-footed *Francisquita*. "Care not, O Concho," he would say to himself, "'tis but a little while, only a little while, and thou shalt have another *Francisquita* to bless thee. Eh, skipjack, there was fine music to thy dancing. A dollar for an ounce,—'tis as good as silver, and merrier." Yet for all his good spirits he kept a sharp

lookout at certain bends of the mountain trail; not for assassins or brigands, for Concho was physically courageous, but for the Evil one, who, in various forms, was said to lurk in the Santa Cruz Range, to the great discomfort of all true Catholics. He recalled the incident of *Ignacio*, a muleteer of the Franciscan Friars, who, stopping at the *Angelus* to repeat the *Credo*, saw Luzbel plainly in the likeness of a monstrous grizzly bear, mocking him by sitting on his haunches and lifting his paws, clasped together, as if in prayer. Nevertheless, with one hand grasping his reins and his rosary, and the other clutching his whisky flask and revolver, he fared on so rapidly that he reached the summit as the earlier streaks of dawn were outlining the far-off Sierran peaks. Tethering his horse on a strip of table land, he descended cautiously afoot until he reached the bench, the wall of red rock and the crumbled and dismantled furnace. It was as he had left it that morning; there was no trace of recent human visitation. Revolver in hand, Concho examined every cave, gully, and recess, peered behind trees, penetrated copses of buckeye and manzanita, and listened. There was no sound but the faint soughing of the wind over the pines below him. For a while he paced backward and forward with a vague sense of being a sentinel, but his mercurial nature soon rebelled against this monotony, and soon

the fatigues of the day began to tell upon him. Recourse to his whisky flask only made him the drowsier, until at last he was fain to lie down and roll himself up tightly in his blanket. The next moment he was sound asleep.

His horse neighed twice from the summit, but Concho heard him not. Then the brush crackled on the ledge above him, a small fragment of rock rolled near his feet, but he stirred not. And then two black figures were outlined on the crags beyond.

"St-t-t!" whispered a voice. "There is one lying beside the furnace." The speech was Spanish, but the voice was Wiles's.

The other figure crept cautiously to the edge of the crag and looked over. "It is Concho, the imbecile," said Pedro, contemptuously.

"But if he should not be alone, or if he should waken?"

"I will watch and wait. Go you and affix the notification."

Wiles disappeared. Pedro began to creep down the face of the rocky ledge, supporting himself by *chemisal* and brush-wood.

The next moment Pedro stood beside the unconscious man. Then he looked cautiously around. The figure of his companion was lost in the shadow of the rocks above; only a slight crackle of brush betrayed

his whereabouts. Suddenly Pedro flung his *serape* over the sleeper's head, and then threw his powerful frame and tremendous weight full upon Concho's upturned face, while his strong arms clasped the blanket-pinioned limbs of his victim. There was a momentary upheaval, a spasm, and a struggle; but the tightly-rolled blanket clung to the unfortunate man like cerements.

There was no noise, no outcry, no sound of struggle. There was nothing to be seen but the peaceful, prostrate figures of the two men darkly outlined on the ledge. They might have been sleeping in each other's arms. In the black silence the stealthy tread of Wiles in the bush above was distinctly audible.

Gradually the struggles grew fainter. Then a whisper from the crags:

"I can't see you. What are you doing?"

"Watching!"

"Sleeps he?"

"He sleeps!"

"Soundly?"

"Soundly."

"After the manner of the dead?"

"After the fashion of the dead!"

The last tremor had ceased. Pedro rose as Wiles descended.

"All is ready," said Wiles; "you are a witness of my placing the notifications?"

"I am a witness."

"But of this one?" pointing to Concho. "Shall we leave him here?"

"A drunken imbecile,—why not?"

Wiles turned his left eye on the speaker. They chanced to be standing nearly in the same attitude they had stood the preceding night. Pedro uttered a cry and an imprecation, "Carramba! Take your devil's eye from me! What see you? Eh,—what?"

"Nothing, good Pedro," said Wiles, turning his bland right cheek to Pedro. The infuriated and half-frightened ex-vaquero returned the long knife he had half-drawn from its sheath, and growled surlily:

"Go on then! But keep thou on that side, and I will on this." And so, side by side, listening, watching, distrustful of all things, but mainly of each other, they stole back and up into those shadows from which they might like evil spirits have been poetically evoked.

A half hour passed, in which the east brightened, flashed, and again melted into gold. And then the sun came up haughtily, and a fog that had stolen across the summit in the night arose and fled up the mountain side, tearing its white robes in its guilty haste, and leaving them fluttering from tree and crag and scar. A thousand tiny blades, nestling in the crevices of rocks, nurtured in storms and rocked by

the trade winds, stretched their wan and feeble arms toward Him; but Concho the strong, Concho the brave, Concho the light-hearted spake not, nor stirred.

CHAPTER IV.

WHO TOOK IT.

There was persistent neighing on the summit. Concho's horse wanted his breakfast.

This protestation reached the ears of a party ascending the mountain from its western face. To one of the party it was familiar.

"Why, blank it all, that 's Chiquita. That d—d Mexican 's lying drunk somewhere," said the President of the B. M. Co.

"I do n't like the look of this at all," said Dr. Guild, as they rode up beside the indignant animal. "If it had been an American, it might have been carelessness, but no Mexican ever forgets his beast. Drive ahead, boys; we may be too late."

In half an hour they came in sight of the ledge below, the crumbled furnace, and the motionless figure of Concho, wrapped in a blanket, lying prone in the sunlight.

"I told you so,—drunk!" said the President.

The Doctor looked grave, but did not speak. They dismounted and picketed their horses. Then crept on all fours to the ledge above the furnace. There was a cry from Secretary Gibbs, "Look yer. Some fellar has been jumping us, boys. See these notices."

There were two notices on canvas affixed to the rock, claiming the ground, and signed by Pedro, Manuel, Miguel, Wiles, and Roscommon.

"This was done, Doctor, while your trustworthy Greaser locater, — d——n him, — lay there drunk. What 's to be done now?"

But the Doctor was making his way to the unfortunate cause of their defeat, lying there quite mute to their reproaches. The others followed him.

The Doctor knelt beside Concho, unrolled him, placed his hand upon his wrist, his ear over his heart, and then said:

"Dead."

"Of course. He got medicine of you last night. This comes of your d—d heroic practice."

But the Doctor was too much occupied to heed the speaker's raillery. He had peered into Concho's protuberant eye, opened his mouth, and gazed at the swollen tongue, and then suddenly rose to his feet.

"Tear down those notices, boys, but keep them. Put up your own. Don't be alarmed, you will not

be interfered with, for here is murder added to robbery."

"Murder?"

"Yes," said the Doctor. excitedly, "I 'll take my oath on any inquest that this man was strangled to death. He was surprised while asleep. Look here." He pointed to the revolver still in Concho's stiffening hand, which the murdered man had instantly cocked, but could not use in the struggle.

"That 's so," said the President, "no man goes to sleep with a cocked revolver. What 's to be done?"

"Everything," said the Doctor. "This deed was committed within the last two hours; the body is still warm. The murderer did not come our way, or we should have met him on the trail. He is, if anywhere, between here and *Tres Pinos*."

"Gentlemen," said the President, with a slight preparatory and half judicial cough, "two of you will stay here and stick! The others will follow me to *Tres Pinos*. The law has been outraged. You understand the Court!"

By some odd influence the little group of half-cynical, half-trifling, and wholly reckless men had become suddenly sober, earnest citizens. They said, "Go on," nodded their heads, and betook themselves to their horses.

"Had we not better wait for the inquest and swear out a warrant?" said the Secretary, cautiously.

"How many men have we?"

"Five!"

"Then," said the President, summing up the Revised Statutes of the State of California in one strong sentence; "then we do n't want no d——d warrant."

CHAPTER V.

WHO HAD A LIEN ON IT.

It was high noon at *Tres Pinos*. The three pines from which it gained its name, in the dusty road and hot air, seemed to smoke from their balsamic spires. There was a glare from the road, a glare from the sky, a glare from the rocks, a glare from the white canvas roofs of the few shanties and cabins which made up the village. There was even a glare from the unpainted red-wood boards of Roscommon's grocery and tavern, and a tendency of the warping floor of the veranda to curl up beneath the feet of the intruder. A few mules, near the watering trough, had shrunk within the scant shadow of the corral.

The grocery business of Mr. Roscommon, although adequate and sufficient for the village, was not exhaust-

ing nor overtaxing to the proprietor; the refilling of the pork and flour barrel of the average miner was the work of a brief hour on Saturday nights, but the daily replenishment of the average miner with whisky was arduous and incessant. Roscommon spent more time behind his bar than his grocer's counter. Add to this the fact that a long shed-like extension or wing bore the legend, 'Cosmopolitan Hotel, Board or Lodging by the Day or Week. M. Roscommon,' and you got an idea of the variety of the proprietor's functions. The 'hotel,' however, was more directly under the charge of Mrs. Roscommon, a lady of thirty years, strong, truculent, and good-hearted.

Mr. Roscommon had early adopted the theory that most of his customers were insane, and were to be alternately bullied or placated, as the case might be. Nothing that occurred, no extravagance of speech nor act, ever ruffled his equilibrium, which was as dogged and stubborn as it was outwardly calm. When not serving liquor, or in the interval while it was being drank, he was always wiping his counter with an exceedingly dirty towel,—or indeed anything that came handy. Miners, noticing this purely perfunctory habit, occasionally supplied him slily with articles inconsistent with their service,—fragments of their shirts and underclothing, flour sacking, tow, and once with a flannel petticoat of his wife's, stolen from the

line in the back yard. Roscommon would continue his wiping without looking up, but yet conscious of the presence of each customer. "And it 's not another dhrop ye 'll git, Jack Brown, until ye 've wiped out the black score that stands agin ye." "And it 's there ye are, darlint, and it 's here 's the bottle that 's been lukin' for ye sins Saturday." "And fwhot hev you done with the last I sent ye, ye divil of a McCorkle, and here 's me back that 's bruk entoirely wid dipping intil the pork barl to giv ye the best sides, and ye spending yur last cint on a tare into Gilroy. Whist! and if it 's fer foighting ye are, boys, there 's an illigant bit of sod beyant the corral, and it may be meself 'll come out with a shtick and be sociable."

On this particular day, however, Mr. Roscommon was not in his usual spirits, and when the clatter of horses' hoofs before the door announced the approach of strangers, he absolutely ceased wiping his counter and looked up as Dr. Guild, the President, and Secretary of the new Company strode into the shop.

"We are looking," said the President, "for a man by the name of Wiles, and three Mexicans known as Pedro, Manuel, and Miguel."

"Ye are?"

"We are!"

"Faix, and I hope ye 'll foind 'em. And if ye 'll git from 'em the score I 've got agin 'em, darlint, I 'll add a blessing to it."

There was a laugh at this from the bystanders, who, somehow, resented the intrusion of these strangers.

"I fear you will find it no laughing matter, gentlemen," said Dr. Guild, a little stiffly, "when I tell you that a murder has been committed, and the men I am seeking within an hour of that murder put up that notice signed by their names," and Dr. Guild displayed the paper.

There was a breathless silence among the crowd as they eagerly pressed around the Doctor. Only Roscommon kept on wiping his counter.

"You will observe, gentlemen, that the name of Roscommon also appears on this paper as one of the original locaters."

"And sure, darlint," said Roscommon, without looking up, "if ye 've no better ividince agin them boys then you have forninst me, it 's home ye 'd bether be riding to wanst. For it 's meself as has n't sturred fut out of the store the day and noight,— more betoken as the boys I 've sarved kin testify."

"That 's so, Ross' right," chorused the crowd, "We 've been running the old man all night."

"Then how comes your name on this paper?"

"O murdher! will ye listen to him, boys? As if every felly that owed me a whisky bill did n't come to me and say, 'Ah, Misther Roscommon,' or 'Moike,' as the case moight be, sure it 's an illigant sthrike I 've

made this day, and it 's meself that has put down your name as an original locater, and yer fortune 's made Mr. Roscommon, and will yer fill me up another quart for the good luck betune you and me. Ah, but ask Jack Brown over yan if it is n't sick that I am of his original locations."

The laugh that followed this speech, and its practical application, convinced the party that they had blundered, that they could obtain no clue to the real culprits here, and that any attempt by threats would meet violent opposition. Nevertheless the Doctor was persistent:

"When did you see these men last?"

"When did I see them, is it? Bedad, what with sarvin up the liquor and keeping me counters dry and swate, I never see them at all."

"That 's so, Ross," chorused the crowd again, to whom the whole proceeding was delightfully farcical.

"Then I can tell you, gentlemen," said the Doctor, stiffly, "that they were in Monterey last night, that they did not return on that trail this morning, and that they must have passed here at daybreak."

With these words, which the Doctor regretted as soon as delivered, the party rode away.

Mr. Roscommon resumed his service and counter wiping. But late that night, when the bar was closed and the last loiterer was summarily ejected, Mr. Ros-

common, in the conjugal privacy of his chamber, produced a legal-looking paper. "Read it, Maggie, darlint, for it's meself never had the larning nor the parts."

Mistress Roscommon took the paper:

"Shure, it's law papers, making over some property to yis. O Moike! ye hav n't been spekilating!"

"Whist! and fwhotz that durty gray paper wid the sales and flourishes?"

"Faix, it bothers me intoirely. Shure it oin't in English."

"Whist! Maggie, it's a Spanish grant!"

"A Spanish grant? O Moike, and what did ye giv for it?"

Mr. Roscommon laid his finger beside his nose, and said softly, "Whishky!"

PART II.—IN THE COURTS.

CHAPTER VI.

HOW A GRANT WAS GOT FOR IT.

While the Blue Mass Company, with more zeal than discretion were actively pursuing Pedro and Wiles over the road to *Tres Pinos*, Senors Miguel and Manuel were comfortably seated in a *fonda* at Monterey, smoking *cigarritos* and discussing their late discovery. But they were in no better mood than their late companions, and it appeared from their conversation that in an evil moment they had sold out their interest in the alleged silver mine to Wiles and Pedro for a few hundred dollars,—succumbing to what they were assured would be an active opposition on the part of the *Americanos*. The astute reader will easily understand that the accomplished Mr. Wiles did not inform them of its value as a quicksilver mine, although he was obliged to impart his secret to Pedro as a necessary accomplice and reckless coadjutor. That

Pedro felt no qualms of conscience in thus betraying his two comrades may be inferred from his recent direct and sincere treatment of Concho, and that he would, if occasion offered or policy made it expedient, as calmly obliterate Mr. Wiles,—that gentleman himself never for a moment doubted.

"If we had waited but a little he would have given more,—this cock-eye!" regretted Manuel querulously.

"Not a *peso*," said Miguel, firmly.

"And why, my Miguel? Thou knowest we could have worked the mine ourselves."

"Good, and lost even that labor. Look you, little brother. Show to me now the Mexican that has ever made a *real* of a mine in California. How many, eh? None! Not a one. Who owns the Mexican's mine, eh? *Americanos!* Who takes money from the Mexican's mine? *Americanos!* Thou rememberest Briones, who spent a gold mine to make a silver one? Who has the lands and house of Briones? *Americanos!* Who has the cattle of Briones? *Americanos!* Who has the mine of Briones? *Americanos!* Who has the silver Briones never found? *Americanos!* Always the same! Forever! Ah! *carramba!*"

Then the Evil One evidently took it into his head and horns to worry and toss these men — comparatively innocent as they were — still further, for a purpose. For presently to them appeared one Victor Garcia,

whilom a clerk of the *Ayuntemiento*, who rallied them over *aguardiente*, and told them the story of the quicksilver discovery, and the two mining claims taken out that night by Concho and Wiles. Whereat Manuel exploded with profanity and burnt blue with sulphurous malediction; but Miguel, the recent ecclesiastic, sat livid and thoughtful. Finally came a pause in Manuel's bombardment, and something like this conversation took place between the cooler actors:

Miguel (thoughtfully). "When was it thou didst petition for lands in the valley, friend Victor?"

Victor (amazedly). "Never! It is a sterile waste. Am I a fool?"

Miguel (softly). "Thou didst. Of thy Governor, Micheltorena. I have seen the application."

Victor (beginning to appreciate a rodential odor). "*Si!* I had forgotten. Art thou sure it was in the valley?"

Miguel (persuasively). "In the valley and up the *falda*."*

Victor (with decision). "Certainly. Of a verity, — the *falda* likewise."

Miguel (eyeing Victor). "And yet thou hadst not the grant. Painful is it that it should have been

* *Falda*, or *valda*, *i. e.*, that part of the skirt of a woman's robe that breaks upon the ground, and is also applied to the final slope of a hill, from the angle that it makes upon the level plain.

burned with the destruction of the other archives, by the *Americanos* at Monterey."

Victor (cautiously feeling his way). "*Possiblemente.*"

Miguel. "It might be wise to look into it."

Victor (bluntly). "As why?"

Miguel. "For our good and thine, friend Victor. We bring thee a discovery; thou bringest us thy skill, thy experience, thy government knowledge,—thy Custom House paper." *

Manuel (breaking in drunkenly). "But for what? We are Mexicans. Are we not fated? We shall lose. Who shall keep the *Americanos* off?"

Miguel. "We shall take *one* American in! Ha! seest thou? This American comrade shall bribe his courts, his *corregidores*. After a little he shall supply the men who invent the machine of steam, the mill, the furnace, eh?"

Victor. "But who is he,—not to steal?"

Miguel. "He is that man of Ireland, a good Catholic, at *Tres Pinos*."

Victor and Manuel (*omnes*). "Roscommon?"

Miguel. "Of the same. We shall give him a share for the provisions, for the tools, for the *aguardiente*. It is of the Irish that the *Americanos* have great fear.

* Grants, applications and official notifications, under the Spanish Government, were drawn on a stamped paper known as Custom House paper.

It is of them that the votes are made,— that the President is chosen. It is of him that they make the *Alcalde* in San Francisco. And we are of the Church, like him."

They said '*Bueno*' altogether, and for the moment appeared to be upheld by a religious enthusiasm,— a joint confession of faith that meant death, destruction, and possibly forgery, as against the men who thought otherwise.

This spiritual harmony did away with all practical consideration and doubt. "I have a little niece," said Victor, "whose work with the pen is marvellous. If one says to her, 'Carmen, copy me this, or the other one,'—even if it be copper-plate,— look you it is done, and you cannot know of which is the original. *Madre de Dios!* the other day she makes me a rubric* of the Governor, Pio Pico, the same, identical. Thou knowest her, Miguel. She asked concerning thee yesterday."

With the embarrassment of an underbred man, Miguel tried to appear unconcerned, but failed dismally. Indeed, I fear that the black eyes of Carmen had already done their perfect and accepted work, and had partly induced the application for Victor's aid. He, however, dissembled so far as to ask:

* The Spanish '*rubric*' is the complicated flourish attached to a signature, and is as individual and characteristic as the handwriting.

"But will she not know?"

"She is a child."

"But will she not talk?"

"Not if I say nay, and if thou — eh, Miguel?"

This bit of flattery (which, by the way, was a lie, for Victor's niece did not incline favorably to Miguel) had its effect. They shook hands over the table. "But," said Miguel, "what is to be done must be done now." "At the moment," said Victor, "and thou shalt see it done. Eh? Does it content thee? then come!"

Miguel nodded to Manuel. "We will return in an hour; wait thou here."

They filed out into the dark, irregular street. Fate led them to pass the office of Dr. Guild at the moment that Concho mounted his horse. The shadows concealed them from their rival, but they overheard the last injunctions of the President to the unlucky Concho.

"Thou hearest?" said Miguel, clutching his companion's arm.

"Yes," said Victor. "But let him ride, my friend; in one hour we shall have that that shall arrive *years* before him," and with a complacent chuckle they passed unseen and unheard until, abruptly turning a corner, they stopped before a low *adobe* house.

It had once been a somewhat pretentious dwelling,

but had evidently followed the fortunes of its late owner, Don Juan Briones, who had offered it as a last sop to the three-headed Cerberus that guarded the *El Refugio* Plutonean treasures, and who had swallowed it in a single gulp. It was in very bad case. The furrows of its red-tiled roof looked as if they were the results of age and decrepitude. Its best room had a musty smell; there was the dampness of deliquescence in its slow decay, but the Spanish Californians were sensible architects, and its massive walls and partitions defied the earthquake thrill, and all the year round kept an even temperature within.

Victor led Miguel through a low ante-room into a plainly-furnished chamber, where Carmen sat painting.

Now Mistress Carmen was a bit of a painter, in a pretty little way, with all the vague longings of an artist, but without, I fear, the artist's steadfast soul. She recognized beauty and form as a child might, without understanding their meaning, and somehow failed to make them even interpret her woman's moods, which surely were nature's too. So she painted everything with this innocent lust of the eye,—flowers, birds, insects, landscapes, and figures,—with a joyous fidelity, but no particular poetry. The bird never sang to her but one song, the flowers or trees spake but one language, and her skies never brightened except in color.

She came out strong on the Catholic saints, and would toss you up a cleanly-shaven Aloysius, sweetly destitute of expression, or a dropsical, lethargic Madonna that you could n't have told from an old master, so bad it was. Her faculty of faithful reproduction even showed itself in fanciful lettering,— and latterly in the imitation of fabrics and signatures. Indeed, with her eye for beauty of form, she had always excelled in penmanship at the Convent,— an accomplishment which the good sisters held in great repute.

In person she was *petite*, with a still unformed girlish figure, perhaps a little too flat across the back, and with possibly a too great tendency to a boyish stride in walking. Her brow, covered by blue-black hair, was low and frank and honest; her eyes, a very dark hazel, were not particularly large, but rather heavily freighted in their melancholy lids with sleeping passion; her nose was of that unimportant character which no man remembers; her mouth was small and straight; her teeth, white and regular. The whole expression of her face was piquancy that might be subdued by tenderness or made malevolent by anger. At present it was a salad in which the oil and vinegar were deftly combined. The astute feminine reader will of course understand that this is the ordinary superficial masculine criticism, and at once make up her mind both as to the character of the young lady

and the competency of the critic. I only know that *I* rather liked her. And her functions are somewhat important in this veracious history.

She looked up, started to her feet, leveled her black brows at the intruder, but, at a sign from her uncle, showed her white teeth and spake.

It was only a sentence, and a rather common-place one at that; but if she could have put her voice upon her canvas, she might have retrieved the Garcia fortunes. For it was so musical, so tender, so sympathizing, so melodious, so replete with the graciousness of womanhood, that she seemed to have invented the language. And yet that sentence was only an exaggerated form of the 'How d' ye do,' whined out, doled out, lisped out, or shot out from the pretty mouths of my fair country-women.

Miguel admired the paintings. He was struck particularly with a crayon drawing of a mule. "Mother of God, it is the mule itself! observe how it will not go." Then the crafty Victor broke in with, "But it is nothing to her writing; look, you shall tell to me which is the handwriting of Pio Pico;" and, from a drawer in the secretary, he drew forth two signatures. One was affixed to a yellowish paper, the other drawn on plain white foolscap. Of course Miguel took the more modern one with lover-like gallantry. "It is this is genuine!" Victor laughed triumphantly; Car-

men echoed the laugh melodiously in child-like glee, and added, with a slight toss of her piquant head, "It is mine!" The best of the sex will not refuse a just and overdue compliment from even the man they dislike. It 's the principle they 're after, not the sentiment.

But Victor was not satisfied with this proof of his niece's skill. "Say to her," he demanded of Miguel, "what name thou likest, and it shall be done before thee here." Miguel was not so much in love but he perceived the drift of Victor's suggestion, and remarked that the rubric of Governor Micheltorena was exceedingly complicated and difficult. "She shall do it!" responded Victor, with decision.

From a file of old departmental papers the Governor's signature and that involved rubric, which must have cost his late Excellency many youthful days of anxiety, was produced and laid before Carmen.

Carmen took her pen in her hand, looked at the brownish-looking document, and then at the virgin whiteness of the foolscap before her. "But," she said, pouting prettily, "I should have to first paint this white paper brown. And it will absorb the ink more quickly than that. When I painted the *San Antonio* of the Mission San Gabriel for Father Acolti, I had to put the decay in with my oils and brushes before the good Padre would accept it."

The two scamps looked at each other. It was their supreme moment. "I think I have," said Victor, with assumed carelessness, "I think I have some of the old Custom-House paper." He produced from the secretary a sheet of brown paper with a stamp. "Try it on that."

Carmen smiled with childish delight, tried it, and produced a marvel! "It is as magic," said Miguel, feigning to cross himself.

Victor's *role* was more serious. He affected to be deeply touched, took the paper, folded it, and placed it in his breast. "I shall make a good fool of Don Jose Castro," he said; "he will declare it is the Governor's own signature, for he was his friend; but have a care, Carmen! that you spoil it not by the opening of your red lips. When he is fooled, I will tell him of this marvel,—this niece of mine, and he shall buy her pictures. Eh, little one?" and he gave her the avuncular caress, *i. e.*, a pat of the hand on either cheek, and a kiss. Miguel envied him, but cupidity outgeneraled Cupid, and presently the conversation flagged, until a convenient recollection of Victor's—that himself and comrade were due at the *Posada del Toros* at 10 o'clock—gave them the opportunity to retire.

But not without a chance shot from Carmen. "Tell to me," she said, half to Victor and half to Miguel,

"what has chanced with Concho? He was ever ready to bring to me flowers from the mountain, and insects and birds. Thou knowest how he would sit, oh, my uncle, and talk to me of the rare rocks he had seen, and the bears and the evil spirits, and now he comes no longer, my Concho! How is this? Nothing evil has befallen him, surely?" and her drooping lids closed half-pathetically.

Miguel's jealousy took fire. "He is drunk, Senorita, doubtless, and has forgotten not only thee but, mayhap, his mule and pack! It is his custom, ha! ha!"

The red died out of Carmen's ripe lips, and she shut them together with a snap like a steel purse. The dove had suddenly changed to a hawk; the child-girl into an antique virago; the spirit hitherto dimly outlined in her face, of some shrewish Garcia ancestress, came to the fore. She darted a quick look at her uncle, and then, with her little hands on her rigid lips, strode with two steps up to Miguel.

"Possibly, O Senor Miguel Dominguez Perez (a profound courtesy here) it is as thou sayest. Drunkard Concho may be; but, drunk or sober, he never turned his back on his friend — or — (the words grated a little here) — his enemy."

Miguel would have replied, but Victor was ready. "Fool," he said, pinching his arm, "'tis an old friend.

And — and — the application is still to be filled up. Are you crazy?"

But on this point Miguel was not, and with the revenge of a rival added to his other instincts, he permitted Victor to lead him away.

On their return to the *fonda*, they found Master Manuel too far gone with *aguardiente*, and a general animosity to the average *Americano*, to be of any service. So they worked alone, with pen, ink, and paper, in the stuffy, *cigarrito*-clouded back room of the *fonda*. It was midnight, two hours after Concho had started, that Miguel clapped spurs to his horse for the village of *Tres Pinos*, with an application to Governor Micheltorena for a grant to the 'Rancho of the Red Rocks' comfortably bestowed in his pocket.

CHAPTER VII.

WHO PLEAD FOR IT.

There can be little doubt the coroner's jury of Fresno would have returned a verdict of 'death from alcoholism,' as the result of their inquest into the cause of Concho's death, had not Dr. Guild fought

nobly in support of the law and his own convictions. A majority of the jury objected to there being any inquest at all. A sincere juryman thought it hard that whenever a Greaser pegged out in a sneakin' kind o' way, American citizens should be taken from their business to find out what ailed him. "S'pose he was killed," said another, "thar ain't no time this thirty year he were n't, so to speak, just sufferin' for it, ez his nat'ral right ez a Mexican." The jury at last compromised by bringing in a verdict of homicide against certain parties unknown. Yet it was understood tacitly that these unknown parties were severally Wiles and Pedro; Manuel, Miguel, and Roscommon proving an unmistakable *alibi*. Wiles and Pedro had fled to Lower California, and Manuel, Miguel, and Roscommon deemed it advisable, in the then excited state of the public mind, to withhold the forged application and claim from the courts and the public comment. So that for a year after the murder of Concho and the flight of his assassins 'The Blue Mass Mining Company' remained in undisturbed and actual possession of the mine, and reigned in their stead.

But the spirit of the murdered Concho would not down any more than that of the murdered Banquo, and so wrought, no doubt, in a quiet, Concho-like way, sore trouble with the 'Blue Mass Company.' For a great Capitalist and Master of Avarice came down

to the mine and found it fair, and taking one of the Company aside, offered to lend his name and a certain amount of coin for a controlling interest, accompanying the generous offer with a suggestion that if it were not acceded to he would be compelled to buy up various Mexican mines and flood the market with quicksilver to the great detriment of the 'Blue Mass Company,' which thoughtful suggestion, offered by a man frequently alluded to as one of 'California's great mining princes,' and as one who had 'done much to develop the resources of the State,' was not to be lightly considered; and so, after a cautious non-consultation with the Company, and a commendable secrecy, the stockholder sold out. Whereat it was speedily spread abroad that the great Capitalist had taken hold of 'Blue Mass,' and the stock went up, and the other stockholders rejoiced — until the great Capitalist found that it was necessary to put up expensive mills, to employ a high salaried Superintendent, in fact, to develop the mine by the spending of its earnings, so that the stock quoted at 112 was finally saddled with an assessment of $50 per share. Another assessment of $50 to enable the Superintendent to proceed to Russia and Spain and examine into the workings of the quicksilver mines there, and also a general commission to the gifted and scientific Pillageman to examine into the various component parts of quick-

silver, and report if it could not be manufactured from ordinary sand-stone by steam or electricity, speedily brought the other stockholders to their senses. It was at this time the good fellow 'Tom,' the serious-minded 'Dick,' and the speculative but fortunate 'Harry,' brokers of the Great Capitalist, found it convenient to buy up, for the Great Capitalist aforesaid, the various other shares at great sacrifice.

I fear that I have bored my readers in thus giving the tiresome details of that ingenuous American pastime which my country-men dismiss in their epigrammatic way as the 'freezing-out process.' And lest any reader should question the ethics of the proceeding, I beg him to remember that one gentleman accomplished in this art was always a sincere and direct opponent of the late Mr. John Oakhurst, gambler.

But for once the Great Master of Avarice had not taken into sufficient account the avarice of others, and was suddenly and virtuously shocked to learn that an application for a patent for certain lands, known as the 'Red-Rock Rancho,' was about to be offered before the United States Land Commission. This claim covered his mining property. But the information came quietly and secretly, as all of the Great Master's information was obtained, and he took the opportunity to sell out his clouded title and his proprietorship to the only remaining member of the origi-

nal 'Blue Mass Company,' a young fellow of pith, before many-tongued rumor had voiced the news far and wide. The blow was a heavy one to the party left in possession. Saddled by the enormous debts and expenses of the Great Capitalist, with a credit now further injured by the defection of this lucky magnate, who was admired for his skill in anticipating a loss, and whose relinquishment of any project meant ruin to it, the single-handed, impoverished possessor of the mine, whose title was contested, and whose reputation was yet to be made,—poor Biggs, first secretary and only remaining officer of the 'Blue Mass Company,' looked ruefully over his books and his last transfer, and sighed. But I have before intimated that he was built of good stuff, and that he believed in his work,—which was well,—and in himself, which was better; and so, having faith even as a grain of mustard seed, I doubt not he would have been able to remove that mountain of quicksilver beyond the overlapping of fraudulent grants. And, again, Providence—having disposed of these several scamps —raised up to him a friend. But that friend is of sufficient importance to this veracious history to deserve a paragraph to himself.

The Pylades of this Orestes was known of ordinary mortals as Royal Thatcher. His genealogy, birth, and education are, I take it, of little account to this chroni-

cle, which is only concerned with his friendship for Biggs and the result thereof. He had known Biggs a year or two previously; they had shared each other's purses, bunks, cabins, provisions, and often friends, with that perfect freedom from obligation which belonged to the pioneer life. The varying tide of fortune had just then stranded Thatcher on a desert sand hill in San Francisco, with an uninsured cargo of Expectations, while to Thatcher's active but not curious fancy it had apparently lifted his friend's bark over the bar in the Monterey mountains into an open quicksilver sea. So that he was considerably surprised on receiving a note from Biggs to this purport:

"DEAR ROY, Run down here and help a fellow. I've too much of a load for one. Maybe we can make a team and pull 'Blue Mass' out yet. BIGGSEY."

Thatcher, sitting in his scantily furnished lodgings, doubtful of his next meal and in arrears for rent, heard this Macedonian cry as St. Paul did. He wrote a promissory and soothing note to his landlady, but fearing the 'sweet sorrow' of a personal parting, let his collapsed valise down from his window by a cord, and, by means of an economical combination of stage riding and pedestrianism, he presented himself, at the close of the third day, at Biggs's door. In a few moments he was in possession of the story; half an hour later in possession of half the mine, its infelix past and its doubtful future, equally with his friend.

Business over, Biggs turned to look at his partner. "You 've aged some since I saw you last," he said. "Starvation luck, I s'pose. I 'd know your eyes, old fellow, if I saw them among ten thousand; but your lips are parched, and your mouth 's grimmer than it used to be." Thatcher smiled to show that he could still do so, but did not say, as he might have said, that self-control, suppressed resentment, disappointment, and occasional hunger had done something in the way of correcting Nature's obvious mistakes, and shutting up a kindly mouth. He only took off his thread-bare coat, rolled up his sleeves, and saying, "We 've got lots of work and some fighting before us," pitched into the 'affairs' of the 'Blue Mass Company' on the instant.

CHAPTER VIII.

OF COUNSEL FOR IT.

Meanwhile Roscommon had waited. Then, in Garcia's name, and backed by him, he laid his case before the Land Commissioner, filing the application (with forged indorsements) to Governor Micheltorena, and alleging that the original grant was destroyed by fire. And why?

It seemed there was a limit to Miss Carmen's imitative talent. Admirable as it was, it did not reach to the reproduction of that official seal, which would have been a necessary appendage to the Governor's grant. But there were letters written on stamped paper by Governor Micheltorena to himself, Garcia, and to Miguel, and to Manuel's father, all of which were duly signed by the sign manual and rubric of Mrs.-Governor-Micheltorena-Carmen-de-Haro. And then there was 'parol' evidence, and plenty of it; witnesses who remembered everything about it,—namely, Manuel, Miguel, and the all-recollecting De Haro; here were details, poetical and suggestive; and Dame-Quicklyish, as when his late Excellency, sitting not 'by a sea-coal fire,' but with *aguardiente* and *cigarros*, had sworn to him, the ex-ecclesiastic Miguel, that he should grant, and had granted, Garcia's request. There were clouds of witnesses, conversations, letters, and records, glib and pat to the occasion. In brief, there was nothing wanted but the seal of his Excellency. The only copy of that was in the possession of a rival school of renaissant art and the restoration of antiques, then doing business before the Land Commission.

And yet the claim was rejected! Having lately recommended two separate claimants to a patent for the same land, the Land Commission became cautious and conservative.

Roscommon was at first astounded, then indignant, and then warlike,— he was for an 'appale to onst!'

With the reader's previous knowledge of Roscommon's disposition this may seem somewhat inconsistent; but there are certain natures to whom litigation has all the excitement of gambling, and it should be borne in mind that this was his first lawsuit. So that his lawyer, Mr. Saponaceous Wood, found him in that belligerent mood to which counsel are obliged to hypocritically bring all the sophistries of their profession. "Of course you have your right to an appeal, but calm yourself, my dear sir, and consider. The case was presented strongly, the evidence overwhelming on our side, but we happened to be fighting *previous decisions of the Land Commission that had brought them into trouble;* so that if Micheltorena had himself appeared in Court and testified to his giving you the grant, it would have made no difference,— no Spanish grant had a show then, nor will it have for the next six months. You see, my dear sir, the Government sent out one of its big Washington lawyers to look into this business, and he reported frauds, sir, frauds, in a majority of the Spanish claims. And why, sir? why? He was bought, sir, bought— body and soul— by the Ring!"

"And fwhot 's the Ring?" asked his client sharply.

"The Ring is — ahem! a combination of unprincipled but wealthy persons to defeat the ends of justice."

"And sure, fwhot 's the Ring to do wid me grant as that thaving Mexican gave me as the collatherals for the bourd he was owin' me? Eh, mind that now!"

"The Ring, my dear sir, is the other side. It is — ahem! always the Other Side."

"And why the divel have n't we a Ring too? And aint I payin' ye five hundred dollars,— and the divel of Ring ye have, at all, at all? Fwhot am I payin' ye fur, eh?"

"That a judicious expenditure of money," began Mr. Wood, "outside of actual disbursements, may not be of infinite service to you I am not prepared to deny,— but —"

"Look ye, Mr. Sappy Wood, it 's the 'appale' I want, and the grant I 'll have, more betoken as the old woman's har-rut and me own is set on it entoirely. Get me the land and I 'll give ye the half of it, — and it 's a bargain!"

"But, my dear sir, there are some rules in our profession,— technical though they may be —"

"The divel fly away wid yer profession. Sure is it better nor me own? If I 've risked me provisions and me whisky, that cost me solid goold in Frisco, on that thafe Garcia's claim, bedad! the loikes of ye can risk yer law."

"Well," said Wood, with an awkward smile, "I suppose that a deed for one half, on the consideration

of friendship, my dear sir, and a dollar in hand paid by me, might be reconcilable."

"Now it 's talkin' ye are. But who 's the felly we 're foighten, that 's got the Ring?"

"Ah, my dear sir, it 's the United States," said the lawyer with gravity.

"The States! the Goverment is it? And is 't that ye 're afeared of? Sure it 's the Goverment that I fought in me own counthree, it was the Goverment that druv me to Ameriky, and is it now that I 'm goin' back on me principles?"

"Your political sentiments do you great credit," began Mr. Wood.

"But fwhot 's the Goverment to do wid the appale?"

"The Government," said Mr. Wood significantly, "will be represented by the District Attorney."

"And who 's the spalpeen?"

"It is rumored," said Mr. Wood slowly, "that a new one is to be appointed. *I*, myself, have had some ambition that way."

His client bent a pair of cunning but not over-wise grey eyes on his American lawyer. But he only said, "Ye have, eh?"

"Yes," said Wood, answering the look boldly; "and if I had the support of a number of your prominent country-men, who are so powerful with *all* parties,—

men like *you*, my dear sir,— why, I think you might in time become a conservative, at least more resigned to the Government."

Then the lesser and the greater scamp looked at each other, and for a moment or two felt a warm, sympathetic, friendly emotion for each other, and quietly shook hands.

Depend upon it there is a great deal more kindly human sympathy between two openly-confessed scamps than there is in that calm, respectable recognition that you and I, dear reader, exhibit when we happen to oppose each other with our respective virtues.

"And ye 'll get the appale?"

"I will."

And he DID! And by a singular coincidence got the District Attorneyship also. And with a deed for one half of the 'Red-Rock Rancho' in his pocket, sent a brother lawyer in court to appear for his client, the United States, as against *himself*, Roscommon, Garcia, *et al.* Wild horses could not have torn him from this noble resolution. There is an indescribable delicacy in the legal profession which we literary folk ought to imitate.

The United States lost! Which meant ruin and destruction to the 'Blue Mass Company,' who had bought from a paternal and beneficent Government lands which did n't belong to it. The Mexican grant, of course,

ante-dated the occupation of the mine by Concho, Wilce, Pedro, *et al.*, as well as by the 'Blue Mass Company,' and the solitary partners, Biggs and Thatcher. More than that, it swallowed up their improvements. It made Biggs and Thatcher responsible to Garcia for all the money the Grand Master of Avarice had made out of it. Mr. District Attorney was apparently distressed, but resigned. Messrs. Biggs and Thatcher were really distressed and combative.

And then, to advance a few years in this chronicle, began real litigation with earnestness, vigor, courage, zeal, and belief on the part of Biggs and Thatcher, and technicalities, delay, equivocation, and a general Fabian-like policy on the part of Garcia, Roscommon, *et al.* Of all these tedious processes I note but one, which for originality and audacity of conception appears to me to indicate more clearly the temper and civilization of the epoch. A subordinate officer of the District Court refused to obey the mandate ordering a transcript of the record to be sent up to the United States Supreme Court. It is to be regretted that the name of this Ephesian youth, who thus fired the dome of our constitutional liberties, should have been otherwise so unimportant as to be confined to the dusty records of that doubtful court of which he was a doubtful servitor, and that his claim to immortality ceased with his double-feed service. But there still stands on

record a letter by this young gentleman, arraigning the legal wisdom of the land, which is not entirely devoid of amusement or even instruction to young men desirous of obtaining publicity and capital. Howbeit, the Supreme Court was obliged to protect itself by procuring the legislation of his functions out of his local fingers into the larger palm of its own attorney.

These various processes of law and equity, which, when exercised practically in the affairs of ordinary business, might have occupied a few months' time, dragged, clung, retrograded, or advanced slowly during a period of eight or nine years. But the strong arms of Biggs and Thatcher held POSSESSION, and possibly, by the same tactics employed on the other side, arrested or delayed ejectment, and so made and sold quicksilver, while their opponents were spending gold, until Biggs, sorely hit in the interlacings of his armor, fell in the lists, his cheek growing waxen and his strong arm feeble, and finding himself in this sore condition, and passing, as it were, made over his share in trust to his comrade, and died. Whereat, from that time henceforward, Royal Thatcher reigned in his stead.

And so, having anticipated the legal record, we will go back to the various human interests that helped to make it up.

To begin with Roscommon: To do justice to his later conduct and expressions, it must be remembered

that when he accepted the claim for the 'Red-Rock Rancho,' yet unquestioned, from the hands of Garcia, he was careless, or at least unsuspicious of fraud. It was not until he had experienced the intoxication of litigation that he felt, somehow, that he was a wronged and defrauded man, but with the obstinacy of defrauded men, preferred to arraign some one fact or individual as the impelling cause of his wrong, rather than the various circumstances that led to it. To his simple mind it was made patent that the 'Blue Mass Company' were making money out of a mine which he claimed, and which was not yet adjudged to them. Every dollar they took out was a fresh count in this general indictment. Every delay towards this adjustment of rights — although made by his own lawyer — was a personal wrong. The mere fact that there never was nor had been any *quid pro quo* for this immense property — that it had fallen to him for a mere song — only added zest to his struggle. The possibility of his losing this mere speculation affected him more strongly than if he had already paid down the million he expected to get from the mine. I don't know that I have indicated as plainly as I might that universal preference on the part of mankind to get something from nothing, and to acquire the largest return for the least possible expenditure, but I question my right to say that Roscommon was much more reprehensible than his fellows.

But it told upon him as it did upon all over whom the spirit of the murdered Concho brooded,—upon all whom avarice alternately flattered and tortured. From his quiet gains in his legitimate business, from the little capital accumulated through industry and economy, he lavished thousands on this chimera of his fancy. He grew grizzled and worn over his self-imposed delusion; he no longer jested with his customers, regardless of quality or station or importance; he had cliques to mollify, enemies to placate, friends to reward. The grocery suffered; through giving food and lodgment to clouds of unimpeachable witnesses before the Land Commission and the District Court, 'Mrs. Ros.' found herself losing money. Even the bar failed; there was a party of 'Blue Mass' employes who drank at the opposite *fonda*, and cursed the Roscommon claim over the liquor. The calm, mechanical indifference with which Roscommon had served his customers was gone. The towel was no longer used after its perfunctory fashion; the counter remained unwiped; the disks of countless glasses marked its surface, and indicated other pre-occupation on the part of the proprietor. The keen grey eyes of the claimant of the 'Red-Rock Rancho' were always on the lookout for friend or enemy.

Garcia comes next. That gentleman's inborn talent for historic misrepresentation culminated unpleasantly through a defective memory; a year or two after he

had sworn in his application for the 'Rancho,' being engaged in another case, some trifling inconsistency was discovered in his statements, which had the effect of throwing the weight of evidence to the party who had paid him most, but was instantly detected by the weaker party. Garcia's pre-eminence as a witness, an expert and general historian began to decline. He was obliged to be corroborated, and this required a liberal outlay of his fee. With the loss of his credibility as a witness bad habits supervened. He was frequently drunk, he lost his position, he lost his house, and Carmen, removed to San Francisco, supported him with her brush.

And this brings us once more to that pretty painter and innocent forger whose unconscious act bore such baleful fruit on the barren hill-sides of the 'Red-Rock Rancho,' and also to a later blossom of her life, that opened, however, in kindlier sunshine.

CHAPTER IX.

WHAT THE FAIR HAD TO DO ABOUT IT.

The house that Royal Thatcher so informally quitted in his exodus to the promised land of Biggs was one of those over-sized, under-calculated dwellings conceived and erected in the extravagance of the San

Francisco builder's hopes, and occupied finally in his despair. Intended originally as the palace of some inchoate California Aladdin, it usually ended as a lodging house in which some helpless widow or hopeless spinster managed to combine respectability with the hard task of bread getting. Thatcher's landlady was one of the former class. She had unfortunately survived not only her husband but his property, and, living in some deserted chamber, had, after the fashion of the Italian nobility, let out the rest of the ruin. A tendency to dwell upon these facts gave her conversation a peculiar significance on the first of each month. Thatcher had noticed this with the sensitiveness of an impoverished gentleman. But when, a few days after her lodger's sudden disappearance, a note came from him containing a draft in noble excess of all arrears and charges, the widow's heart was lifted, and the rock smitten with the golden wand gushed beneficence that shone in a new gown for the widow and a new suit for 'Johnny,' her son, a new oil cloth in the hall, better service to the lodgers, and, let us be thankful, a kindlier consideration for the poor little black-eyed painter from Monterey, then dreadfully behind in her room rent. For, to tell the truth, the calls upon Miss De Haro's scant purse by her uncle had lately been frequent, perjury having declined in the Monterey market, through excessive and injudicious supply,

until the line of demarcation between it and absolute verity was so finely drawn that Victor Garcia had remarked that "he might as well tell the truth at once and save his soul, since the devil was in the market."

Mistress Plodgitt, the landlady, could not resist the desire to acquaint Carmen De Haro with her good fortune. "He was always a friend of yours, my dear, — and I know him to be a gentleman that would never let a poor widow suffer; and see what he says about you!" Here she produced Thatcher's note and read: "Tell my little neighbor that I shall come back soon to carry her and her sketching tools off by force, and I shall not let her return until she has caught the black mountains and the red rocks she used to talk about, and put the 'Blue Mass' mill in the foreground of the picture I shall order."

What is this, little one? Surely, Carmen, thou needst not blush at this, thy first grand offer. Holy Virgin! is it of a necessity that thou shouldst stick the wrong end of thy brush in thy mouth, and then drop it in thy lap? Or was it taught thee by the good Sisters at the convent to stride in that boyish fashion to the side of thy elders and snatch from their hands the missive thou wouldst read? More of this we would know, O Carmen, — smallest of brunettes, — speak, little one, even in thine own melodious speech, that I may commend thee and thy rare discretion to my own fair country-women.

Alas, neither the present chronicler nor Mistress Plodgitt got any further information from the prudent Carmen, and must fain speculate upon certain facts that were already known.

Mistress Carmen's little room was opposite to Thatcher's, and once or twice, the doors being open, Thatcher had a glimpse across the passage of a black-haired and a sturdy, boyish little figure in a great blue apron, perched on a stool before an easel, and on the other hand, Carmen had often been conscious of the fumes of a tobacco pipe penetrating her cloistered seclusion, and had seen across the passage, vaguely enveloped in the same nicotine cloud, an American Olympian, in a rocking chair, with his feet on the mantel shelf. They had once or twice met on the staircase, on which occasion Thatcher had greeted her with a word or two of respectful yet half-humorous courtesy,—a courtesy which never really offends a true woman, although it often piques her self-aplomb by the slight assumption of superiority in the humorist. A woman is quick to recognize the fact that the great and more dangerous passions are always *serious*, and may be excused if in self-respect she is often induced to try if there be not somewhere under the skin of this laughing Mercutio the flesh and blood of a Romeo. Thatcher was by nature a defender and protector; weakness, and weakness alone, stirred the

depths of his tenderness,—often, I fear, only through its half-humorous aspects,—and on this plane he was pleased to place women and children. I mention this fact for the benefit of the more youthful members of my species, and am satisfied that an unconditional surrender and the complete laying down at the feet of Beauty of all strong masculinity is a cheap Gallicism that is untranslatable to most women worthy the winning. For a woman *must* always look up to the man she truly loves,—even if she has to go down on her knees to do it.

Only the masculine reader will infer from this that Carmen was in love with Thatcher; the more critical and analytical feminine eye will see nothing herein that might not have happened consistently with friendship. For Thatcher was no sentimentalist; he had hardly paid a compliment to the girl,—even in the unspoken but most delicate form of attention. There were days when his room door was closed; there were days succeeding these blanks when he met her as frankly and naturally as if he had seen her yesterday. Indeed, on those days following his flight the simple-minded Carmen, being aware—heaven knows how—that he had not opened his door during that period, and fearing sickness, sudden death, or perhaps suicide, by her appeals to the landlady, assisted unwittingly in discovering his flight and defection. As she was for

a few moments as indignant as Mrs. Plodgitt, it is evident that she had but little sympathy with the delinquent. And besides, hitherto she had known only Concho, her earliest friend, and was true to his memory, as against all *Americanos*, whom she firmly believed to be his murderers.

So she dismissed the offer and the man from her mind, and went back to her painting,—a fancy portrait of the good Padre Junipero Serra, a great missionary, who, haply for the integrity of his bones and character, died some hundred years before the Americans took possession of California. The picture was fair but unsaleable, and she began to think seriously of sign painting, which was then much more popular and marketable. An unfinished head of *San Juan de Bautista*, artificially framed in clouds, she disposed of to a prominent druggist for $50, where it did good service as exhibiting the effect of four bottles of 'Jones's Freckle Eradicator,' and in a pleasant and unobtrusive way revived the memory of the saint. Still, she felt weary and was growing despondent, and had a longing for the good Sisters and the blameless lethargy of conventual life, and then ——

He came!

But not as the Prince should come, on a white charger, to carry away this cruelly-abused and enchanted damsel. He was sun-burned, he was bearded

like 'the pard;' he was a little careless as to his dress, and pre-occupied in his ways. But his mouth and eyes were the same; and when he repeated in his old frank, half-mischievous way the invitation of his letter, poor little Carmen could only hesitate and blush.

A thought struck him and sent the color to his face. Your gentleman born is always as modest as a woman. He ran down stairs, and seizing the widowed Plodgitt, said hastily:

"You 're just killing yourself here. Take a change. Come down to Monterey for a day or two with me, and bring Miss De Haro with you for company."

The old lady recognized the situation. Thatcher was now a man of vast possibilities. In all maternal daughters of Eve there is the slightest bit of the chaperone and match-maker. It is the last way of reviving the past.

She consented, and Carmen De Haro could not well refuse.

The ladies found the 'Blue Mass' mills very much as Thatcher had previously delivered it to them, "a trifle rough and mannish." But he made over to them the one tenement reserved for himself, and slept with his men, or more likely under the trees. At first Mrs. Plodgitt missed gas and running water, and these several conveniences of civilization, among which I

fear may be mentioned sheets and pillow cases; but the balsam of the mountain air soothed her neuralgia and her temper. As for Carmen, she rioted in the unlimited license of her absolute freedom from conventional restraint and the indulgence of her child-like impulses. She scoured the ledges far and wide alone; she dipped into dark copses, and scrambled over sterile patches of *chemisal*, and came back laden with the spoil of buckeye blossoms, *manzanita* berries and laurel. But she would not make a sketch of the 'Blue Mass Company's' mills on a Mercator's projection — something that could be afterwards lithographed or chromoed, with the mills turning out tons of quicksilver through the energies of a happy and picturesque assemblage of miners — even to please her *padrone*, Don Royal Thatcher. On the contrary, she made a study of the ruins of the crumbled and decayed red-rock furnace, with the black mountain above it, and the light of a dying camp fire shining upon it, and the dull-red excavations in the ledge. But even this did not satisfy her until she had made some alterations; and when she finally brought her finished study to Don Royal, she looked at him a little defiantly. Thatcher admired honestly, and then criticised a little humorously and dishonestly. "But could n't you, for a consideration, put up a sign-board on that rock with the inscription, 'Road to the Blue Mass Company's new mills to the

right,' and combine business with art? That 's the fault of you geniuses. But what 's this blanketed figure doing here, lying before the furnace? You never saw one of my miners there,— and a Mexican, too, by his *serape*." "That," quoth Mistress Carmen, coolly, "was put in to fill up the foreground,— I wanted something there to balance the picture." "But," continued Thatcher, dropping into unconscious admiration again, "it 's drawn to the life. Tell me, Miss De Haro, before I ask the aid and counsel of Mrs. Plodgitt, who is my hated rival, and your lay figure and model?" "Oh," said Carmen, with a little sigh, "It 's only poor Concho." "And where is Concho?" (a little impatiently.) "He 's dead, Don Royal." "Dead?" "Of a verity,— very dead,— murdered by your countrymen." "I see,— and you know him?" "He was my friend."

"Oh!"

"Truly."

"But" (wickedly), "is n't this a rather ghastly advertisement — outside of an illustrated newspaper — of my property?"

"Ghastly, Don Royal. Look you, he sleeps."

"Ay" (in Spanish), "as the dead."

Carmen (crossing herself hastily), "After the fashion of the dead."

They were both feeling uncomfortable. Carmen

was shivering. But, being a woman, and tactful, she recovered her head first. "It is a study for myself, Don Royal; I shall make you another."

And she slipped away, as she thought, out of the subject and his presence.

But she was mistaken; in the evening he renewed the conversation. Carmen began to fence, not from cowardice or deceit, as the masculine reader would readily infer, but from some wonderful feminine instinct that told her to be cautious. But he got from her the fact, to him before unknown, that she was the niece of his main antagonist, and, being a gentleman, so redoubled his attentions and his courtesy that Mrs. Plodgitt made up her mind that it was a foregone conclusion, and seriously reflected as to what she should wear on the momentous occasion. But that night poor Carmen cried herself to sleep, resolving that she would hereafter cast aside her wicked uncle for this good-hearted *Americano*, yet never once connected her innocent penmanship with the deadly feud between them. Women — the best of them — are strong as to collateral facts, swift of deduction, but vague as children are to the exact statement or recognition of premises. It is hardly necessary to say that Carmen had never thought of connecting any act of hers with the claims of her uncle, and the circumstance of the signature she had totally forgotten.

The masculine reader will now understand Carmen's confusion and blushes, and believe himself an ass to have thought them a confession of original affection. The feminine reader will, by this time, become satisfied that the deceitful minx's sole idea was to gain the affections of Thatcher. And really I do n't know who is right.

Nevertheless she painted a sketch for Thatcher,— which now adorns the Company's office in San Francisco, – in which the property is laid out in pleasing geometrical lines, and the rosy promise of the future instinct in every touch of the brush. Then, having earned her 'wage,' as she believed, she became somewhat cold and shy to Thatcher. Whereat that gentleman redoubled his attentions, seeing only in her presence a certain *meprise*, which concerned her more than himself. The niece of his enemy meant nothing more to him than an interesting girl,— to be protected always, — to be feared, never. But even suspicion may be insidiously placed in noble minds.

Mistress Plodgitt, thus early estopped of matchmaking, of course put the blame on her own sex, and went over to the stronger side — the man's.

"It 's a great pity gals should be so curious," she said, *sotto voce*, to Thatcher, when Carmen was in one of her sullen moods. "Yet I s'pose it 's in her blood. Them Spaniards is always revengeful,— like the Eyetalians."

Thatcher honestly looked his surprise.

"Why, do n't you see, she 's thinking how all these lands might have been her uncle's but for you. And instead of trying to be sweet and—" here she stopped to cough.

"Good God!" said Thatcher in great concern, "I never thought of that." He stopped for a moment, and then added with decision, "I can't believe it; it is n't like her."

Mrs. P. was piqued. She walked away, delivering however, this Parthian arrow: "Well, I hope *'t aint nothing worse.*"

Thatcher chuckled, then felt uneasy. When he next met Carmen, she found his grey eyes fixed on hers with a curious, half-inquisitorial look she had never noticed before. This only added fuel to the fire. Forgetting their relations of host and guest, she was absolutely rude. Thatcher was quiet but watchful; got the Plodgitt to bed early, and, under cover of showing a moon-light view of the 'Lost Chance Mill,' decoyed Carmen out of ear-shot, as far as the dismantled furnace.

"What is the matter, Miss De Haro; have I offended you?"

Miss Carmen was not aware that anything was the matter. If Don Royal preferred old friends, whose loyalty of course he knew, *and who were above speak-*

ing ill against a gentleman in his adversity — (oh, Carmen! fie!) if he preferred *their* company to *later friends* — why — (the masculine reader will observe this tremendous climax and tremble) — why she did n't know why *he* should blame *her*.

They turned and faced each other. The conditions for a perfect misunderstanding could not have been better arranged between two people. Thatcher was a masculine reasoner, Carmen a feminine feeler, — if I may be pardoned the expression. Thatcher wanted to get at certain facts, and argue therefrom. Carmen wanted to get at certain feelings, and then fit the facts to *them*.

"But I am *not* blaming you, Miss Carmen," he said gravely. "It *was* stupid in me to confront you here with the property claimed by your uncle and occupied by me, but it was a mistake, — no!" he added hastily, "it was not a mistake. You knew it, and I did n't. You overlooked it before you came, and I was too glad to overlook it after you were here."

"Of course," said Carmen pettishly, "I am the only one to be blamed. It 's like you *men!* (Mem. She was just fifteen, and uttered this awful *resumé* of experience just as if it had n't been taught to her in her cradle.)

Feminine generalities always stagger a man. Thatcher said nothing. Carmen became more enraged.

"Why did you want to take Uncle Victor's property, then?" she asked triumphantly.

"I do n't know that it is your uncle's property."

"You — do n't — know? Have you seen the application with Governor Micheltorena's indorsement? Have you heard the witnesses?" she said passionately.

"Signatures may be forged and witnesses lie," said Thatcher quietly.

"What is it you call 'forged'?"

Thatcher instantly recalled the fact that the Spanish language held no synonym for 'forgery.' The act was apparently an invention of *el Diablo Americano.* So he said, with a slight smile in his kindly eyes:

"Anybody wicked enough and dexterous enough can imitate another's handwriting. When this is used to benefit fraud, we call it 'forgery.' I beg your pardon, — Miss De Haro, Miss Carmen, — what is the matter?"

She had suddenly lapsed against a tree, quite helpless, nerveless, and with staring eyes fixed on his. As yet an embryo woman, inexperienced and ignorant, the sex's instinct was potential; she had in one plunge fathomed all that his reason had been years groping for.

Thatcher saw only that she was pained, that she was helpless: that was enough. "It is possible that your

uncle may have been deceived," he began; "many honest men have been fooled by clever but deceitful tricksters, men and women ——"

"Stop! *Madre de Dios!* WILL YOU STOP?"

Thatcher for an instant recoiled from the flashing eyes and white face of the little figure that had, with menacing and clenched baby fingers, strode to his side. He stopped. "Where is this application,—this forgery?" she asked. "Show it to me!"

Thatcher felt relieved, and smiled the superior smile of our sex over feminine ignorance. "You could hardly expect me to be trusted with your uncle's vouchers. His papers of course are in the hands of his counsel."

"And when can I leave this place?" she asked passionately.

"If you consult my wishes you will stay, if only long enough to forgive me. But if I have offended you unknowingly, and you are implacable ——"

"I can go tomorrow at sunrise if I like?"

"As you will," returned Thatcher gravely.

"*Gracias, Senor.*"

They walked slowly back to the house, Thatcher with a masculine sense of being unreasonably afflicted, Carmen with a woman's instinct of being hopelessly crushed. No word was spoken until they reached the door. Then Carmen suddenly, in her old, impulsive

way, and in a child-like treble, sang out merrily, "Good night, O Don Royal, and pleasant dreams. *Hasta manana.*"

Thatcher stood dumb and astounded at this capricious girl. She saw his mystification instantly. "It is for the old Cat!" she whispered, jerking her thumb over her shoulder in the direction of the sleeping Mrs. P. "Good night,—go!"

He went to give orders for a *peon* to attend the ladies and their equipage the next day. He awoke to find Miss De Haro gone, with her escort, towards Monterey. And without the Plodgitt.

He could not conceal his surprise from the latter lady. She, left alone,—a not altogether unavailable victim to the wiles of our sex,—was embarrassed. But not so much that she could not say to Thatcher: "I told you so,—gone to her uncle * * To tell him *all!*"

"All. D—n it, *what* can she tell him?" roared Thatcher, stung out of his self-control.

"Nothing, I hope, that she should not," said Mrs. P., and chastely retired.

She was right. Miss Carmen posted to Monterey, running her horse nearly off its legs to do it, and then sent back her beast and escort, saying she would rejoin Mrs. Plodgitt by steamer at San Francisco. Then she went boldly to the law office of Saponaceous

Wood, District Attorney and whilom solicitor of her uncle.

With the majority of masculine Monterey Miss Carmen was known and respectfully admired, despite the infelix reputation of her kinsman. Mr. Wood was glad to see her, and awkwardly gallant. Miss Carmen was cool and business-like; she had come from her uncle to 'regard' the papers in the 'Red-Rock Rancho' case. They were instantly produced. Carmen turned to the application for the grant. Her cheek paled slightly. With her clear memory and wonderful fidelity of perception she could not be mistaken. *The signature of Micheltorena was in her own handwriting!*

Yet she looked up to the lawyer with a smile: "May I take these papers for an hour to my uncle?"

Even an older and better man than the District Attorney could not have resisted those drooping lids and that gentle voice.

"Certainly."

"I will return them in an hour."

She was as good as her word, and within the hour dropped the papers and a little courtesy to her uncle's legal advocate, and that night took the steamer to San Francisco.

The next morning Victor Garcia, a little the worse for the previous night's dissipation, reeled into Wood's

office. "I have fears for my niece Carmen. She is with the enemy," he said thickly. "Look you at this."

It was an anonymous letter (in Mrs. Plodgitt's own awkward fist) advising him of the fact that his niece was bought by the enemy, and cautioning him against her.

"Impossible," said the lawyer; "it was only last week she sent thee $50."

Victor blushed, even through his ensanguined cheeks, and made an impatient gesture with his hand.

"Besides," added the lawyer coolly, "she has been here to examine the papers at thy request, and returned them of yesterday."

Victor gasped — "And-you-you-gave them to her?"

"Of course!"

"All? Even the application and the signature?"

"Certainly,— you sent her."

"Sent her? The devil's own daughter?" shrieked Garcia. "No! A hundred million times, no! Quick, before it is too late. Give to me the papers."

Mr. Wood reproduced the file. Garcia ran over it with trembling fingers until at last he clutched the fateful document. Not content with opening it and glancing at its text and signature, he took it to the window.

"It is the same," he muttered with a sigh of relief.

"Of course it is," said Mr. Wood sharply. "The papers are all there. You're a fool, Victor Garcia!"

And so he was. And, for the matter of that, so was Mr. Saponaceous Wood, of counsel.

Meanwhile Miss De Haro returned to San Francisco and resumed her work. A day or two later she was joined by her landlady. Mrs. P. has too large a nature to permit an anonymous letter, written by her own hand, to stand between her and her demeanor to her little lodger. So she coddled her and flattered her and depicted in slightly exaggerated colors the grief of Don Royal at her sudden departure. All of which Miss Carmen received in a demure, kitten-like way, but still kept quietly at her work. In due time Don Royal's order was completed; still she had leisure and inclination enough to add certain touches to her ghastly sketch of the crumbling furnace.

Nevertheless, as Don Royal did not return, through excess of business, Mrs. Plodgitt turned an honest penny by letting his room, temporarily, to two quiet Mexicans, who, but for a beastly habit of *cigarrito* smoking which tainted the whole house, were fair enough lodgers. If they failed in making the acquaintance of their fair country-woman, Miss De Haro, it was through that lady's pre-occupation in her own work, and not through their ostentatious endeavors.

"Miss De Haro is peculiar," explained the politic Mrs. Plodgitt to her guests; "she makes no acquaintances, which I consider bad for her business. If it

had not been for me, she would not have known Royal Thatcher, the great quicksilver miner,—and had his order for a picture of his mine!"

The two foreign gentlemen exchanged glances. One said, "Ah, God! this is bad," and the other, "It is not possible;" and then, when the landlady's back was turned, introduced themselves with a skeleton key into the then vacant bed-room and studio of their fair country-woman, who was absent sketching. "Thou observest," said Mr. Pedro, refugee, to Miguel, ex-ecclesiastic, "that this *Americano* is all powerful, and that this Victor, drunkard as he is, is right in his suspicions."

"Of a verity, yes," replied Miguel, "thou dost remember it was Jovita Castro who, for her *Americano* lover, betrayed the Sobriente claim. It is only with us, my Pedro, that the Mexican spirit, the real God and Liberty, yet lives!"

They shook hands nobly and with sentimental fervor, and then went to work, *i. e.*, the rummaging over the trunks, drawers, and porte-manteaus of the poor little painter, Carmen De Haro, and even ripped up the mattress of her virginal cot. But they found not what they sought.

"What is that yonder on the easel, covered with a cloth?" said Miguel: "it is a trick of these artists to put their valuables together."

Pedro strode to the easel and tore away the muslin curtain that veiled it; then uttered a shriek that appalled his comrade and brought him to his side.

"In the name of God," said Miguel hastily, "are you trying to alarm the house?"

The ex-vaquero was trembling like a child. "Look," he said hoarsely, "look, do you see? It is the hand of God," and fainted on the floor!

Miguel looked. It was Carmen's partly-finished sketch of the deserted furnace. The figure of Concho, thrown out strongly by the camp fire, occupied the left foreground. But to balance her picture she had evidently been obliged to introduce another,—the face and figure of Pedro, on all fours, creeping towards the sleeping man.

PART III.—IN CONGRESS.

CHAPTER X.

WHO LOBBIED FOR IT.

It was a midsummer's day in Washington. Even at early morning, while the sun was yet level with the faces of pedestrians in its broad, shadeless avenues, it was insufferably hot. Later the avenues themselves

shone like the diverging rays of another sun,—the Capitol,—a thing to be feared by the naked eye. Later yet it grew hotter, and then a mist arose from the Potomac, and blotted out the blazing arch above, and presently piled up along the horizon delusive thunder clouds, that spent their strength and substance elsewhere, and left it hotter than before. Towards evening the sun came out invigorated, having cleared the heavenly brow of perspiration, but leaving its fever unabated.

The city was deserted. The few who remained apparently buried themselves from the garish light of day in some dim, cloistered recess of shop, hotel, or restaurant; and the perspiring stranger, dazed by the outer glare, who broke in upon their quiet, sequestered repose, confronted collarless and coatless specters of the past, with fans in their hands, who, after dreamily going through some perfunctory business, immediately retired to sleep after the stranger had gone. Congressmen and Senators had long since returned to their several constituencies with the various information that the country was going to ruin, or that the outlook never was more hopeful and cheering, as the tastes of their constituency indicated. A few Cabinet officers still lingered, having by this time become convinced that they could do nothing their own way, or indeed in any way but the old way, and getting gloomily

resigned to their situation. A body of learned, cultivated men, representing the highest legal tribunal in the land, still lingered in a vague idea of earning the scant salary bestowed upon them by the economical founders of the Government, and listened patiently to the arguments of counsel, whose fees for advocacy of claims before them would have paid the life income of half the bench. There was Mr. Attorney General and his assistants still protecting the Government's millions from rapacious hands, and drawing the yearly public pittance that their wealthier private antagonists would have scarce given as a retainer to their junior counsel. The little standing army of departmental employes,—the helpless victims of the most senseless and idiotic form of discipline the world has known,—a discipline so made up of caprice, expediency, cowardice, and tyranny that its reform meant revolution, not to be tolerated by legislators and law-givers, or a despotism in which half a dozen accidentally-chosen men interpreted their prejudices or preferences as being that Reform. Administration after administration and Party after Party had persisted in their desperate attempts to fit the youthful colonial garments, made by our Fathers after a by-gone fashion, over the expanded limits and generous outline of a matured nation. There were patches here and there; there were grievous rents and holes here and there; there were ludicrous

and painful exposures of growing limbs everywhere; and the Party in Power and the Party out of Power could do nothing but mend and patch, and revamp and cleanse and scour, and occasionally, in the wildness of despair, suggest even the cutting off the rebellious limbs that persisted in growing beyond the swaddling clothes of its infancy.

It was a capital of Contradictions and Inconsistencies. At one end of the Avenue sat the responsible High Keeper of the military honor, valor, and warlike prestige of a great nation, without the power to pay his own troops their legal dues until some selfish quarrel between Party and Party was settled. Hard by sat another Secretary, whose established functions seemed to be the misrepresentation of the nation abroad by the least characteristic of its classes, the politicians,—and only then when they had been defeated as politicians, and when their constituents had declared them no longer worthy to be even *their* representatives. This National Absurdity was only equaled by another, wherein an Ex-Politician was for four years expected to uphold the honor of a flag of a great nation over an ocean he had never tempted, with a discipline the rudiments of which he could scarcely acquire before he was removed, or his term of office expired, receiving his orders from a superior officer as ignorant of his special duties as himself, and subjected to the

revision of a Congress cognizant of him only as a politician. At the farther end of the Avenue was another department so vast in its extent and so varied in its functions that few of the really great practical workers of the land would have accepted its responsibility for ten times its salary, but which the most perfect constitution in the world handed over to men who were obliged to make it a stepping stone to future preferment. There was another department, more suggestive of its financial functions from the occasional extravagances or economies exhibited in its pay-rolls, — successive Congresses having taken other matters out of its hands, — presided over by an official who bore the title and responsibility of the Custodian and Disburser of the Nation's Purse, and received a salary that a bank-President would have sniffed at. For it was part of this Constitutional Inconsistency and Administrative Absurdity that in the matter of honor, justice, fidelity to trust, and even business integrity, the official was always expected to be the superior of the Government he represented. Yet the crowning Inconsistency was that, from time to time, it was submitted to the sovereign people to declare if these various Inconsistencies were not really the perfect expression of the most perfect Government the world had known. And it is to be recorded that the unanimous voices of Representative, Orator, and Unfettered Poetry were that it was!

Even the public press lent itself to the Great Inconsistency. It was as clear as crystal to the journal on one side of the Avenue that the country was going to the dogs unless the *spirit* of the Fathers once more reanimated the public; it was equally clear to the journal on the other side of the Avenue that only a rigid adherence to the *letter* of the Fathers would save the nation from decline. It was obvious to the first-named journal that the 'letter' meant Government patronage to the other journal; it was potent to that journal that the 'shekels' of Senator X really animated the spirit of the Fathers. Yet all agreed it was a great and good and perfect government,—subject only to the predatory incursions of a Hydra-headed monster known as a 'Ring.' The Ring's origin was wrapped in secrecy, its fecundity was alarming; but although its rapacity was preternatural, its digestion was perfect and easy. It circumvolved all affairs in an atmosphere of mystery; it clouded all things with the dust and ashes of distrust. All disappointment of place, of avarice, of incompetency or ambition, was clearly attributable to it. It even permeated private and social life; there were Rings in our kitchen and household service; in our public schools, that kept the active intelligences of our children passive; there were Rings of engaging, handsome, dissolute young fellows, who kept us moral but unengaging seniors from the favors

of the fair; there were subtle, conspiring Rings among our creditors, which sent us into bankruptcy and restricted our credit. In fact it would not be hazardous to say that all that was calamitous in public and private experience was clearly traceable to that combination of power in a minority over weakness in a majority — known as a Ring.

Haply there was a body of demigods, as yet uninvoked, who should speedily settle all that. When Smith of Minnesota, Robinson of Vermont, and Jones of Georgia, returned to Congress from those rural seclusions so potent with information and so freed from local prejudices, it was understood, vaguely, that great things would be done. This was always understood. There never was a time in the history of American politics when, to use the expression of the journals before alluded to, "the present session of Congress" did not "bid fair to be the most momentous in our history," and did not, as far as the facts go, leave a vast amount of unfinished important business lying hopelessly upon its desks, having 'bolted' the rest as rashly and with as little regard to digestion or assimilation as the American traveller has for his railway refreshment.

In this capital, on this languid midsummer day, in an upper room of one of its second-rate hotels, the Honorable Pratt C. Gashwiler sat at his writing

table. There are certain large, fleshy men with whom the omission of even a neck-tie or collar has all the effect of an indecent exposure. The Hon. Mr. Gashwiler, in his trousers and shirt, was a sight to be avoided by the modest eye. There were such palpable sug gestions of vast extents of unctuous flesh in the slight glimpse offered by his open throat that his *dishabille* should have been as private as his business. Nevertheless, when there was a knock at his door he unhesitatingly said, "Come in!"—pushing away a goblet crowned with a certain aromatic herb with his right hand, while he drew towards him with his left a few proof slips of his forthcoming speech. The Gashwiler brow became, as it were, intelligently abstracted.

The intruder regarded Gashwiler with a glance of familiar recognition from his right eye, while his left took in a rapid survey of the papers on the table, and gleamed sardonically.

"You are at work, I see," he said apologetically.

"Yes," replied the Congressman, with an air of perfunctory weariness,—"one of my speeches. Those d—d printers make such a mess of it; I suppose I do n't write a very fine hand."

If the gifted Gashwiler had added that he did not write a very intelligent hand, or a very grammatical hand, and that his spelling was faulty, he would have been truthful, although the copy and proof before him

might not have borne him out. The near fact was that the speech was composed and written by one Expectant Dobbs, a poor retainer of Gashwiler, and the honorable member's labor as a proof-reader was confined to the introduction of such words as 'anarchy,' 'oligarchy,' 'satrap,' 'palladium,' and 'Argus-eyed' in the proof, with little relevancy as to position or place, and no perceptible effect as to argument.

The stranger saw all this with his wicked left eye, but continued to beam mildly with his right. Removing the coat and waistcoat of Gashwiler from a chair, he drew it towards the table, pushing aside a portly, loud-ticking watch,—the very image of Gashwiler,—that lay beside him, and resting his elbows on the proofs, said:

"Well?"

"Have you anything new?" asked the parliamentary Gashwiler.

"Much! a woman!" replied the stranger.

The astute Gashwiler, waiting further information, concluded to receive this fact gaily and gallantly. "A woman?—my dear Mr. Wiles,—of course! The dear creatures," he continued, with a fat, offensive chuckle, "somehow are always making their charming presence felt. Ha! ha! A man, sir, in public life becomes accustomed to that sort of thing, and knows when he must be agreeable,—agreeable, sir, but firm!

I've had my experience, sir,—my *own* experience," —and the Congressman leaned back in his chair, not unlike a robust St. Anthony who had withstood one temptation to thrive on another.

"Yes," said Wiles impatiently, "but d—n it, she 's on the *other side.*"

"The other side!" repeated Gashwiler vacantly.

"Yes, she 's a niece of Garcia's. A little she devil."

"But Garcia 's on our side," rejoined Gashwiler.

"Yes, but she is bought by the ring."

"A woman!" sneered Mr. Gashwiler; "what can she do with men who won't be made fools of? Is she so handsome?"

"I never saw any great beauty in her," said Wiles shortly, "although they say that she 's rather caught that d—d Thatcher, in spite of his coldness. At any rate, she is his *protege.* But she is n't the sort you 're thinking of, Gashwiler. They say she knows, or pretends to know, something about the grant. She may have got hold of some of her uncle's papers. Those Greasers were always d—d fools; and, if he did anything foolish, like as not he bungled or did n't cover up his tracks. And with his knowledge and facilities too! Why, if I 'd ——" but here Mr. Wiles stopped to sigh over the inequalities of fortune that wasted opportunities on the less skillful scamp.

Mr. Gashwiler became dignified. "She can do nothing with us," he said potentially.

Wiles turned his wicked eye on him. "Manuel and Miguel, who sold out to our man, are afraid of her. They were our witnesses. I verily believe they 'd take back everything if she got after them. And as for Pedro, he thinks she holds the power of life and death over him."

"Pedro! life and death,— what 's all this?" said the astonished Gashwiler.

Wiles saw his blunder, but saw also that he had gone too far to stop. "Pedro," he said, "was strongly suspected of having murdered Concho, one of the original locaters."

Mr. Gashwiler turned white as a sheet, and then flushed again into an apoplectic glow. "Do you dare to say," he began as soon as he could find his tongue and his legs, for in the exercise of his congressional functions these extreme members supported each other, —"do you mean to say," he stammered in rising rage, "that you have dared to deceive an American lawgiver into legislating upon a measure connected with a capital offense? Do I understand you to say, sir, that murder stands upon the record — stands upon the record, sir,— of this cause to which, as a representative of Remus, I have lent my official aid? Do you mean to say that you have deceived my constituency, whose sacred trust I hold, in inveigling me to hiding a crime from the Argus eyes of justice?" And Mr.

Gashwiler looked towards the bell-pull as if about to summon a servant to witness this outrage against the established judiciary.

"The murder, if it *was* a murder, took place before Garcia entered upon this claim, or had a footing in this court," returned Wiles blandly, "and is no part of the record."

"You are sure it is not spread upon the record?"

"I am. You can judge for yourself."

Mr. Gashwiler walked to the window, returned to the table, finished his liquor in a single gulp, and then, with a slight resumption of dignity, said:

"That alters the case."

Wiles glanced with his left eye at the Congressman. The right placedly looked out of the window. Presently he said quietly, "I've brought you the certificates of stock; do you wish them made out in your own name?"

Mr. Gashwiler tried hard to look as if he were trying to recall the meaning of Wiles's words. "Oh!—ah!—umph!—let me see,—oh, yes, the certificates, —certainly! Of course you will make them out in the name of my secretary, Mr. Expectant Dobbs. They will perhaps repay him for the extra clerical labor required in the prosecution of your claim. He is a worthy young man. Although not a public officer, yet he is so near to me that perhaps I am wrong i-

permitting him to accept a fee for private interests. An American representative cannot be too cautious, Mr. Wiles. Perhaps you had better have also a blank transfer. The stock is, I understand, yet in the future. Mr. Dobbs, though talented and praiseworthy, is poor; he may wish to realize. If some — ahem! some *friend* — better circumstanced should choose to advance the cash to him and run the risk,— why it would only be an act of kindness."

"You are proverbially generous, Mr. Gashwiler," said Wiles, opening and shutting his left eye like a dark lantern on the benevolent representative.

"Youth, when faithful and pains-taking, should be encouraged," replied Mr. Gashwiler. "I lately had occasion to point this out in a few remarks I had to make before the Sabbath school reunion at Remus. Thank you, I will see that they are — ahem! — conveyed to him. I shall give them to him with my own hand," he concluded, falling back in his chair, as if the better to contemplate the perspective of his own generosity and condescension. Mr. Wiles took his hat and turned to go. Before he reached the door Mr. Gashwiler returned to the social level with a chuckle:

"You say this woman, this Garcia's niece, is handsome and smart?"

"Yes."

"I can set another woman on the track that 'll euchre her every time!"

Mr. Wiles was too clever to appear to notice the sudden lapse in the Congressman's dignity, and only said, with his right eye:

"Can you?"

"By G–d, I *will*, or I do n't know how to represent Remus."

Mr. Wiles thanked him with his right eye, and looked a dagger with his left. "Good," he said, and added persuasively: "Does she live here?"

The Congressman nodded assent. "An awfully handsome woman,—a particular friend of mine!" Mr. Gashwiler here looked as if he would not mind to have been rallied a little over his intimacy with the fair one; but the astute Mr. Wiles was at the same moment making up his mind, after interpreting the Congressman's look and manner, that he must know this fair incognito if he wished to sway Gashwiler. He determined to bide his time, and withdrew.

The door was scarcely closed upon him when another knock diverted Mr. Gashwiler's attention from his proofs. The door opened to a young man with sandy hair and anxious face. He entered the room deprecatingly, as if conscious of the presence of a powerful being, to be supplicated and feared. Mr. Gashwiler did not attempt to disabuse his mind. "Busy, you see," he said shortly, "correcting your work!"

"I hope it is acceptable?" said the young man timidly.

"Well — yes — it will do," said Gashwiler; "indeed I may say it is satisfactory on the whole," he added with the appearance of a large generosity; "quite satisfactory."

"You have no news, I suppose," continued the young man, with a slight flush, born of pride or expectation.

"No, nothing as yet." Mr. Gashwiler paused as if a thought had struck him.

"I have thought," he said, finally, "that some position — such as a secretaryship with me — would help you to a better appointment. Now, supposing that I make you my private secretary, giving you some important and confidential business. Eh?"

Dobbs looked at his patron with a certain wistful, dog-like expectancy, moved himself excitedly on his chair seat in a peculiar canine-like anticipation of gratitude, strongly suggesting that he would have wagged his tail if he had one. At which Mr. Gashwiler became more impressive.

"Indeed, I may say I anticipated it by certain papers I have put in your charge and in your name, only taking from you a transfer that might enable me to satisfy my conscience hereafter in recommending you as my — ahem! — private secretary. Perhaps, as a mere form, you might now, while you are here, put your name to these transfers, and, so to speak, begin your duties at once."

The glow of pride and hope that mantled the cheek of poor Dobbs might have melted a harder heart than Gashwiler's. But the senatorial toga had invested Mr. Gashwiler with a more than Roman stoicism towards the feelings of others, and he only fell back in his chair in the pose of conscious rectitude as Dobbs hurriedly signed the paper.

"I shall place them in my portman-tell," said Gashwiler, suiting the word to the action, "for safe keeping. I need not inform you, who are now, as it were, on the threshold of official life, that perfect and inviolable secrecy in all affairs of State" — Mr. G. here motioned toward his porte-manteau as if it contained a treaty at least — "is most essential and necessary."

Dobbs assented. "Then my duties will keep me with you here?" he asked doubtfully.

"No, no," said Gashwiler hastily; then, correcting himself, he added: "that is — for the present — no!"

Poor Dobbs's face fell. The near fact was that he had lately had notice to quit his present lodgings in consequence of arrears in his rent, and he had a hopeful reliance that his confidential occupation would carry bread and lodging with it. But he only asked if there were any new papers to make out.

"Ahem! not at present; the fact is I am obliged to give so much of my time to callers — I have today

been obliged to see half a dozen — that I must lock myself up and say 'Not at home' for the rest of the day." Feeling that this was an intimation that the interview was over, the new private secretary, a little dashed as to his near hopes, but still sanguine of the future, humbly took his leave.

But here a certain Providence, perhaps mindful of poor Dobbs, threw into his simple hands — to be used or not, if he were worthy or capable of using it — a certain power and advantage. He had descended the staircase, and was passing through the lower corridor, when he was made the unwilling witness of a remarkable assault.

It appeared that Mr. Wiles, who had quitted Gashwiler's presence as Dobbs was announced, had other business in the hotel, and in pursuance of it had knocked at room No. 90. In response to the gruff voice that bade him enter, Mr. Wiles opened the door, and espied the figure of a tall, muscular, fiery-bearded man extended on the bed, with the bed clothes carefully tucked under his chin, and his arms lying flat by his side.

Mr. Wiles beamed with his right cheek, and advanced to the bed as if to take the hand of the stranger, who, however, neither by word or sign, responded to his salutation.

"Perhaps I'm intruding?" said Mr. Wiles blandly.

"Perhaps you are," said Red Beard dryly.

Mr. Wiles forced a smile on his right cheek, which he turned to the smiter, but permitted the left to indulge in unlimited malevolence. "I wanted merely to know if you have looked into that matter?" he said meekly.

"I 've looked into it and round it and across it and over it and through it," responded the man gravely, with his eyes fixed on Wiles.

"And you have perused all the papers?" continued Mr. Wiles.

"I 've read every paper, every speech, every affidavit, every decision, every argument," said the stranger as if repeating a formula.

Mr. Wiles attempted to conceal his embarrassment by an easy, right-handed smile, that went off sardonically on the left, and continued: "Then I hope, my dear sir, that, having thoroughly mastered the case, you are inclined to be favorable to us?"

The gentleman in the bed did not reply, but apparently nestled more closely beneath the coverlids.

"I have brought the shares I spoke of," continued Mr. Wiles, insinuatingly.

"Hev you a friend within call?" interrupted the recumbent man gently.

"I do n't quite understand!" smiled Mr. Wiles. "Of course any name you might suggest——"

"Hev you a friend, any chap that you might waltz in here at a moment's call?" continued the man in bed. "No? Do you know any of them waiters in the house? Thar 's a bell over yan!" and he motioned with his eyes towards the wall, but did not otherwise move his body.

"No," said Wiles, becoming slightly suspicious and wrathful.

"Mebbe a stranger might do? I reckon thar 's one passin' in the hall. Call him in,—he 'll do!"

Wiles opened the door a little impatiently, yet inquisitively, as Dobbs passed. The man in bed called out, "Oh, stranger!" and, as Dobbs stopped, said, "Come yar."

Dobbs entered a little timidly, as was his habit with strangers.

"I do n't know who you be — nor care, I reckon," said the stranger. "This yer man"—pointing to Wiles — "is Wiles. I 'm Josh Sibblee of Fresno, Member of Congress from the 4th Congressional District of Californy. I 'm jist lying here, with a derringer into each hand,—jist lying here kivered up and holdin' in on'y to keep from blowin' the top o' this d—d skunk's head off. I kinder feel I can't hold in any longer. What I want to say to ye, stranger, is that this yer skunk — which his name is Wiles — hez bin tryin' his d—dest to get a bribe onto Josh,

and Josh, outo respect for his constituents, is jist waitin' for some stranger to waltz in and stop the d—dest fight——"

"But, my dear Mr. Sibblee, there must be some mistake," said Wiles earnestly.

"Mistake? Strip me!"

"No! No!" said Wiles, hurriedly, as the simple-minded Dobbs was about to draw down the coverlid.

"Take him away," said the Hon. Mr. Sibblee, "before I disgrace my constituency. They said I 'd be in jail afore I get through the session. Ef you 've got any humanity, stranger, snake him out, and pow'ful quick, too."

Dobbs, quite white and aghast, looked at Wiles and hesitated. There was a slight movement in the bed. Both men started for the door; and the next minute it closed very decidedly on the member from Fresno.

CHAPTER XI.

HOW IT WAS LOBBIED FOR.

The Hon. Pratt C. Gashwiler, M.C., was of course unaware of the incident described in the last chapter. His secret, even if it had been discovered by Dobbs, was safe in that gentleman's innocent and honorable

hands, and certainly was not of a quality that Mr. Wiles, at present, would have cared to expose. For, in spite of Mr. Wiles's discomfiture, he still had enough experience of character to know that the irate member from Fresno would be satisfied with his own peculiar manner of vindicating his own personal integrity, and would not make a public scandal of it. Again, Wiles was convinced that Dobbs was equally implicated with Gashwiler, and would be silent for his own sake. So that poor Dobbs, as is too often the fate of simple but weak natures, had full credit for duplicity by every rascal in the land.

From which it may be inferred that nothing occurred to disturb the security of Gashwiler. When the door closed upon Mr. Wiles, he indited a note which, with a costly but exceedingly distasteful bouquet,— rearranged by his own fat fingers, and discord and incongruity visible in every combination of color,— he sent off by a special messenger. Then he proceeded to make his toilet,— an operation rarely graceful or picturesque in our sex, and an insult to the spectator when obesity is superadded. When he had put on a clean shirt, of which there was grossly too much, and added a white waistcoat, that seemed to accent his rotundity, he completed his attire with a black frock coat of the latest style, and surveyed himself complacently before a mirror. It is to be recorded that, however

satisfactory the result might have been to Mr. Gashwiler, it was not so to the disinterested spectator. There are some men on whom 'that deformed thief, Fashion,' avenges himself by making their clothes appear perennially new. The gloss of the tailor's iron never disappears; the creases of the shelf perpetually rise in judgment against the wearer. Novelty was the general suggestion of Mr. Gashwiler's full-dress,— it was never his *habitude;* — and 'Our own Make,' 'Nobby,' and the 'Latest Style, only $15,' was as patent on the legislator's broad back as if it still retained the shopman's ticket.

Thus arrayed, within an hour he complacently followed the note and his floral offering. The house he sought had been once the residence of a foreign Ambassador, who had loyally represented his government in a single unimportant treaty, now forgotten, and in various receptions and dinners, still actively remembered by occasional visits to its *salon;* now the average dreary American parlor. "Dear me," the fascinating Mr. X would say, "but do you know, love, in this very room I remember meeting the distinguished Marquis of *Monte Pio;*" or perhaps the fashionable Jones of the State Department instantly crushed the decayed friend he was perfunctorily visiting by saying, "'Pon my soul, *you* here; — why, the last time I was in this room I gossiped for an hour with the

Countess *de Castenet* in that very corner." For, with the recall of the aforesaid Ambassador, the mansion had become a boarding-house, kept by the wife of a departmental clerk.

Perhaps there was nothing in the history of the house more quaint and philosophic than the story of its present occupant. Roger Fauquier had been a departmental clerk for forty years. It was at once his practical good luck and his misfortune to have been early appointed to a position which required a thorough and complete knowledge of the formulas and routine of a department that expended millions of the public funds. Fauquier, on a poor salary, diminishing instead of increasing with his service, had seen successive administrations bud and blossom and decay, but had kept his position through the fact that his knowledge was a necessity to the successive chiefs and employes. Once, it was true that he had been summarily removed by a new Secretary, to make room for a camp follower, whose exhaustive and intellectual services in a political campaign had made him eminently fit for anything; but the alarming discovery that the new clerk's knowledge of grammar and etymology was even worse than that of the Secretary himself, and that, through ignorance of detail, the business of that department was retarded to a damage to the Government of over half a million of dollars, led to the

reinstatement of Mr. Fauquier — *at a lower salary* For it was felt that something was wrong somewhere, and as it had always been the custom of Congress and the administration to cut down salaries as the first step to reform, they made of Mr. Fauquier a moral example. A gentleman born, of somewhat expensive tastes, having lived up to his former salary, this change brought another bread-winner into the field, Mrs. Fauquier, who tried, more or less unsuccessfully, to turn her old Southern habits of hospitality to remunerative account. But as poor Fauquier could never be prevailed upon to present a bill to a gentleman, sir, and as some of the scions of the best Southern families were still waiting for, or had been recently dismissed from, a position, the experiment was a pecuniary failure. Yet the house was of excellent repute and well patronized; indeed, it was worth something to see old Fauquier sitting at the head of his own table, in something of his ancestral style, relating anecdotes of great men now dead and gone, interrupted only by occasional visits from importunate tradesmen.

Prominent among what Mr. Fauquier called his 'little family,' was a black-eyed lady of great powers of fascination, and considerable local reputation as a flirt. Nevertheless, these social aberrations were amply condoned by a facile and complacent husband, who looked with a lenient and even admiring eye upon the

little lady's amusement, and to a certain extent lent a tacit indorsement to her conduct. Nobody minded Hopkinson; in the blaze of Mrs. Hopkinson's fascinations he was completely lost sight of. A few married women with unduly sensitive husbands, and several single ladies of the best and longest standing, reflected severely on her conduct. The younger men of course admired her, but I think she got her chief support from old fogies like ourselves. For it is your quiet, self-conceited, complacent, philosophic, broad-waisted *pater-familias* who, after all, is the one to whom the gay and giddy of the proverbially impulsive, unselfish sex owe their place in the social firmament. We are never inclined to be captious; we laugh at as a folly what our wives and daughters condemn as a fault; *our* 'withers are unwrung,' yet we still confess to the fascinations of a pretty face. We know, bless us, from dear experience, the exact value of one woman's opinion of another; we want our brilliant little friend to shine; it is only the moths who will burn their two-penny immature wings in the flame! And why should they not? Nature has been pleased to supply more moths than candles! Go to! — give the pretty creature—be she maid, wife, or widow—a show! And so, my dear sir, while *mater-familias* bends her black brows in disgust, we smile our superior little smile, and extend to Mistress *Anonyma* our gracious

indorsement. And if giddiness is grateful, or if folly is friendly,— well, of course, *we* can't help that. Indeed it rather proves our theory.

I had intended to say something about Hopkinson; but really there is very little to say. He was invariably good humored. A few ladies once tried to show him that he really ought to feel worse than he did about the conduct of his wife; and it is recorded that Hopkinson, in an excess of good humor and kindliness, promised to do so. Indeed the good fellow was so accessible that it is said that young DeLancy of the Tape Department confided to Hopkinson his jealousy of a rival; and revealed the awful secret that he (DeLancy) had reason to expect more loyalty from his (Hopkinson's) wife. The good fellow is reported to have been very sympathetic, and to have promised DeLancy to lend whatever influence he had with Mrs. Hopkinson in his favor. "You see," he said explanatorily to DeLancy, "she has a good deal to attend to lately, and I suppose has got rather careless,— that 's women's ways. But if *I* can't bring her round I 'll speak to Gashwiler,— I 'll get him to use his influence with Mrs. Hop. So cheer up, my boy, *he 'll* make it all right."

The appearance of a bouquet on the table of Mrs. Hopkinson was no rare event; nevertheless, Mr. Gashwiler's was not there. Its hideous contrasts had

offended her woman's eye,— it is observable that good taste survives the wreck of all the other feminine virtues,— and she had distributed it to make *boutonnieres* for other gentlemen. Yet, when he appeared, she said to him hastily, putting her little hand over the cardiac region:

"I 'm so glad you came. But you gave me *such* a fright an hour ago."

Mr. Gashwiler was both pleased and astounded. "What have I done, my dear Mrs. Hopkinson?" he began.

"Oh, do n't talk," she said sadly. "What have you done, indeed! Why, you sent me that beautiful bouquet. I could not mistake your taste in the arrangement of the flowers;— but my husband was here. You know his jealousy. I was obliged to conceal it from him. *Never* — promise me now — *never* do it again."

Mr. Gashwiler gallantly protested.

"No! I am serious! I was so agitated: he must have seen me blush."

Nothing but the gross flattery of this speech could have clouded its manifest absurdity to the Gashwiler consciousness. But Mr. Gashwiler had already succumbed to the girlish half-timidity with which it was uttered. Nevertheless, he could not help saying:

"But why should he be so jealous now? Only day

before yesterday I saw Simpson of Duluth hand you a nosegay right before him!"

"Ah," returned the lady, "he was outwardly calm *then*, but you know nothing of the scene that occurred between us after you left."

"But," gasped the practical Gashwiler, "Simpson had given your husband that contract,—a cool fifty thousand in his pocket!"

Mrs. Hopkinson looked as dignifiedly at Gashwiler as was consistent with five feet three (the extra three inches being a pyramidal structure of straw-colored hair), a frond of faint curls, a pair of laughing blue eyes, and a small belted waist. Then she said, with a casting down of her lids:

"You forget that my husband loves me." And for once the minx appeared to look penitent. It was becoming; but as it had been originally practiced in a simple white dress, relieved only with pale-blue ribbons, it was not entirely in keeping with beflounced lavender and rose-colored trimmings. Yet the woman who hesitates between her moral expression and the harmony of her dress is lost. And Mrs. Hopkinson was *victrix* by her very audacity.

Mr. Gashwiler was flattered. The most dissolute man likes the appearance of virtue. "But graces and accomplishments like yours, dear Mrs. Hopkinson," he said oleaginously, "belong to the whole

country." Which, with something between a courtesy and a strut, he endeavored to represent. "And I shall want to avail myself of all," he added, "in the matter of the Castro claim. A little supper at Welcker's, a glass or two of champagne, and a single flash of those bright eyes, and the thing is done."

"But," said Mrs. Hopkinson, "I've promised Josiah that I would give up all those frivolities, and although my conscience is clear, you know how people talk! Josiah hears it. Why, only last night, at a reception at the Patagonian Minister's, every woman in the room gossiped about me because I led the German with him. As if a married woman, whose husband was interested in the Government, could not be civil to the representative of a friendly power?"

Mr. Gashwiler did not see how Mr. Hopkinson's late contract for supplying salt pork and canned provisions to the army of the United States should make his wife susceptible to the advances of foreign princes; but he prudently kept that to himself. Still, not being himself a diplomat, he could not help saying:

"But I understood that Mr. Hopkinson did not object to your interesting yourself in this claim, and you know some of the stock ——"

The lady started, and said:

"Stock! Dear Mr. Gashwiler, for Heaven's sake don't mention that hideous name to me. Stock, I am

sick of it! Have you gentlemen no other topic for a lady?"

She punctuated her sentence with a mischievous look at her interlocutor. For a second time, I regret to say, that Mr. Gashwiler succumbed. The Roman constituency at Remus, it is to be hoped, were happily ignorant of this last defection of their great legislator. Mr. Gashwiler instantly forgot his theme,—began to ply the lady with a certain bovine-like gallantry, which it is to be said to her credit she parried with a playful, terrier-like dexterity, when the servant suddenly announced, "Mr. Wiles."

Gashwiler started. Not so Mrs. Hopkinson, who, however, prudently and quietly removed her own chair several inches from Gashwiler's.

"Do you know Mr. Wiles?" she asked pleasantly.

"No! That is, I — ah — yes, I may say I have had some business relations with him," responded Gashwiler rising.

"Won't you stay?" she added pleadingly. "Do!"

Mr. Gashwiler's prudence always got the better of his gallantry. "Not now," he responded in some nervousness. "Perhaps I had better go now, in view of what you have just said about gossip. You need not mention my name to this-er — this — Mr. Wiles." And with one eye on the door, and an awkward dash of his lips at the lady's fingers, he withdrew.

There was no introductory formula to Mr. Wiles's interview. He dashed at once *in medias res*. "Gashwiler knows a woman that, he says, can help us against that Spanish girl who is coming here with proofs, prettiness, fascination, and what not! You must find her out."

"Why?" asked the lady laughingly.

"Because I do n't trust that Gashwiler. A woman with a pretty face and an ounce of brains could sell him out; aye, and *us* with him."

"Oh, say *two* ounces of brains. Mr. Wiles, Mr. Gashwiler is no fool."

"Possibly, except when your sex is concerned, and it is very likely that the woman is his superior."

"I should think so," said Mrs. Hopkinson with a mischievous look.

"Ah, you know her, then?"

"Not so well as I know him," said Mrs. H. quite seriously. "I wish I did."

"Well, you 'll find out if she 's to be trusted! You are laughing,—it is a serious matter! This woman——"

Mrs. Hopkinson dropped him a charming courtesy and said,

"*C'est moi!*"

CHAPTER XII.

A RACE FOR IT.

Royal Thatcher worked hard. That the boyish little painter who shared his hospitality at the 'Blue Mass', mine should afterward have little part in his active life seemed not inconsistent with his habits. At present the mine was his only mistress, claiming his entire time, exasperating him with fickleness, but still requiring that supreme devotion of which his nature was capable. It is possible that Miss Carmen saw this too, and so set about with feminine tact, if not to supplement, at least to make her rival less pertinacious and absorbing. Apart from this object, she zealously labored in her profession, yet with small pecuniary result, I fear. Local art was at a discount in California. The scenery of the country had not yet become famous; rather it was reserved for a certain eastern artist, already famous, to make it so; and people cared little for the reproduction, under their very noses, of that which they saw continually with their own eyes, and valued not. So that little Mistress

Carmen was fain to divert her artist soul to support her plump little material body; and made divers excursions into the regions of ceramic art, painting on velvet, illuminating missals, decorating China, and the like. I have in my possession some wax flowers — a startling fuchsia and a bewildering dahlia — sold for a mere pittance by this little lady, whose pictures lately took the prize at a foreign exhibition, shortly after she had been half starved by a California public, and claimed by a California press as its fostered child of genius.

Of these struggles and triumphs Thatcher had no knowledge; yet he was perhaps more startled than he would own to himself when, one December day, he received this despatch: "Come to Washington at once. — Carmen De Haro."

"Carmen De Haro!" I grieve to state that such was the pre-occupation of this man, elected by fate to be the hero of the solitary amatory episode of this story, that for a moment he could not recall her. When the honest little figure that had so manfully stood up against him, and had proved her sex by afterwards running away from him, came back at last to his memory, he was at first mystified and then self-reproachful. He had been, he felt vaguely, untrue to himself. He had been remiss to the self-confessed daughter of his enemy. Yet why should she telegraph

to him, and what was she doing in Washington? To all these speculations it is to be said to his credit that he looked for no sentimental or romantic answer. Royal Thatcher was naturally modest and self-depreciating in his relations to the other sex, as indeed most men who are apt to be successful with women generally are, despite a vast degree of superannuated bosh to the contrary. To the half dozen women who are startled by sheer audacity into submission there are scores who are piqued by a self-respectful patience; and where a woman has to do half the wooing, she generally makes a pretty sure thing of it.

In his bewilderment Thatcher had overlooked a letter lying on his table. It was from his Washington lawyer. The concluding paragraph caught his eye,— "Perhaps it would be well if you came here yourself. Roscommon is here; and they say there is a niece of Garcia's, lately appeared, who is likely to get up a strong social sympathy for the old Mexican. I don't know that they expect to prove anything by her; but I 'm told she is attractive and clever, and has enlisted the sympathies of the delegation." Thatcher laid the letter down a little indignantly. Strong men are quite as liable as weak women are to sudden inconsistencies on any question they may have in common. What right had this poor little bud he had cherished,— he was quite satisfied now that he had cherished her, and

really had suffered from her absence,— what right had she to suddenly blossom in the sunshine of power to be, perhaps, plucked and worn by one of his enemies He did not agree with his lawyer that she was in any way connected with his enemies: he trusted to her masculine loyalty that far. But here was something vaguely dangerous to the feminine mind,— position, flattery, power. He was almost as firmly satisfied now that he had been wronged and neglected as he had been positive a few moments before that he had been remiss in his attention. The irritation, although momentary, was enough to decide this strong man. He telegraphed to San Francisco; and, having missed the steamer, secured an overland passage to Washington; thought better of it, and partly changed his mind an hour after the ticket was purchased; but, manlike, having once made a practical step in a wrong direction, he kept on rather than admit an inconsistency to himself. Yet he was not entirely satisfied that his journey was a business one. The impulsive, weak little Mistress Carmen had prudently scored one against the strong man.

Only a small part of the present great trans-continental railway at this time had been built, and was but piers at either end of a desolate and wild expanse as yet unbridged. When the overland traveller left the rail at Reno, he left, as it were, civilization with

it; and, until he reached the Nebraska frontier, the rest of his road was only the old emigrant trail traversed by the coaches of the Overland Company. Excepting a part of 'Devil's Canon,' the way was unpicturesque and flat; and the passage of the Rocky Mountains, far from suggesting the alleged poetry of that region, was only a reminder of those sterile distances of a level New-England landscape. The journey was a dreary monotony that was scarcely enlivened by its discomforts, never amounting to actual accident or incident, but utterly destructive to all nervous tissue. Insanity often supervened. "On the third day out," said Hank Monk, driver, speaking casually but charitably of a 'fare,'—"on the third day out, after axing no end of questions and getting no answers, he took to chewing straws that he picked outer the cushion, and kussin' to hisself. From that very day I knew it was all over with him, and I handed him over to his friends at 'Shy Ann,' strapped to the back seat, and ravin' and cussin' at Ben Holliday, the gent'manly proprietor." It is presumed that the unfortunate tourist's indignation was excited at the late Mr. Benjamin Holliday, then the proprietor of the line,—an evidence of his insanity that no one who knew that large-hearted, fastidious, and elegantly-cultured Californian, since allied to foreign nobility, will for a moment doubt.

Mr. Royal Thatcher was too old and experienced a mountaineer to do aught but accept patiently and cynically his brother Californian's method of increasing his profits. As it was generally understood that any one who came from California by that route had some dark design, the victim received little sympathy. Thatcher's equable temperament and indomitable will stood him in good stead, and helped him cheerfully in this emergency. He ate his scant meals, and otherwise took care of the functions of his weak human nature, when and where he could, without grumbling, and at times earned even the praise of his driver by his ability to 'rough it.' Which 'roughing it,' by the way, meant the ability of the passengers to accept the incompetency of the Company. It is true there were times when he regretted that he had not taken the steamer; but then he reflected that he was one of a Vigilance Committee, sworn to hang that admirable man, the late Commodore Cornelius Vanderbilt, for certain practices and cruelties done upon the bodies of certain steerage passengers by his line, and for divers irregularities in their transportation. I mention this fact merely to show how so practical and stout a voyager as Thatcher might have confounded the perplexities attending the administration of a great steamship company with selfish greed and brutality; and that he, with other Californians, may not have known the

fact, since recorded by the Commodore's family clergyman, that the great millionaire was always true to the hymns of his childhood.

Nevertheless, Thatcher found time to be cheerful and helpful to his fellow passengers, and even to be so far interesting to 'Yuba Bill,' the driver, as to have the box seat placed at his disposal. "But," said Thatcher, in some concern, "the box seat was purchased by that other gentleman in Sacramento. He paid extra for it, and his name 's on your way-bill!" "That," said Yuba Bill, scornfully, "do n't fetch me even ef he 'd chartered the whole shebang. Look yar, do you reckon I 'm goin' to spile my temper by setting next to a man with a game eye? And such an eye! Gewhillikins! Why, darn my skin, the other day when we war watering at Webster's, he got down and passed in front of the off-leader,—that yer *pinto* colt that 's bin accustomed to injins, grizzlies, and buffalo, and I 'm bless ef, when her eye tackled his, ef she did n't jist git up and rar round that I reckoned I 'd hev to go down and take them blinders off from *her* eyes and clap on *his*." "But he paid his money, and is entitled to his seat," persisted Thatcher. "Mebbe he is —in the office of the Kempeny," growled Yuba Bill; "but it 's time some folks knowed that out in the plains I run this yer team myself."—A fact which was self-evident to most of the passengers. "I sup-

pose his authority is as absolute on this dreary waste as a ship captain's in mid ocean," exclaimed Thatcher to the baleful-eyed stranger. Mr. Wiles — whom the reader has recognized — assented with the public side of his face, but looked vengeance at Yuba Bill with the other, while Thatcher, innocent of the presence of one of his worst enemies, placated Bill so far as to restore Wiles to his rights. Wiles thanked him. "Shall I have the pleasure of your company far?" Wiles asked insinuatingly. "To Washington," replied Thatcher frankly. "Washington is a gay city during the session," again suggested the stranger. "I 'm going on business," said Thatcher bluntly.

A trifling incident occurred at Pine-Tree Crossing which did not heighten Yuba Bill's admiration of the stranger. As Bill opened the double locked box in the 'boot' of the coach — sacred to Wells, Fargo, & Co.'s Express and the Overland Company's treasures — Mr. Wiles perceived a small, black morocco portemanteau among the parcels. "Ah, you carry baggage there too?" he said sweetly. "Not often," responded Yuba Bill shortly. "Ah, this then contains vaiuables?" "It belongs to that man whose seat you 've got," said Yuba Bill, who, for insulting purposes of his own, preferred to establish the fiction that Wiles was an interloper; "and ef he reckons, in a sorter mixed kempeny like this, to lock up his portmantle, I

do n't know who's business it is. Who?" continued Bill, lashing himself into a simulated rage, "who, in blank, is running this yer team? Hey? Mebbe you think, sittin' up thar on the box seat, you are. Mebbe you think you kin see round corners with that thar eye, and kin pull up for teams round corners, on down grades, a mile ahead?" But here Thatcher, who, with something of Laucelot's concern for Modred, had a noble pity for all infirmities, interfered so sternly that Yuba Bill stopped.

On the fourth day they struck a blinding snow storm, while ascending the dreary plateau that henceforward for six hundred miles was to be their road bed. The horses, after floundering through the drift, gave out completely on reaching the next station, and the prospects ahead, to all but the experienced eye, looked doubtful. A few passengers advised taking to sledges, others a postponement of the journey until the weather changed. Yuba Bill alone was for pressing forward as they were. "Two miles more and we 're on the high grade, whar the wind is strong enough to blow you through the windy, and jist peart enough to pack away over them cliffs every inch of snow that falls. I 'll jist skirmish round in and out o' them drifts on these four wheels whar ye can't drag one o' them flat-bottomed dry-goods boxes through a drift." Bill had a California whip's contempt for a

sledge. But he was warmly seconded by Thatcher, who had the next best thing to experience, the instinct that taught him to read character, and take advantage of another man's experience. "Them that wants to stop kin do so," said Bill authoritatively, cutting the Gordian knot; "them as wants to take a sledge can do so, — thar 's one in the barn. Them as wants to go on with me and the relay will come on." Mr. Wiles selected the sledge and a driver, a few remained for the next stage, and Thatcher, with two others, decided to accompany Yuba Bill. These changes took up some valuable time; and the storm continuing, the stage was run under the shed, the passengers gathering around the station fire; and not until after midnight did Yuba Bill put in the relays. "I wish you a good journey," said Wiles, as he drove from the shed as Bill entered. Bill vouchsafed no reply, but, addressing himself to the driver, said curtly, as if giving an order for the delivery of goods, "Shove him out at Rawlings," and passed contemptuously around to the tail board of the sled, and returned to the harnessing of his relay.

The moon came out and shone high as Yuba Bill once more took the reins in his hands. The wind, which instantly attacked them as they reached the level, seemed to make the driver's theory plausible, and for half a mile the road bed was swept clean, and frozen

hard. Further on a tongue of snow, extending from a boulder to the right, reached across their path to the height of two or three feet. But Yuba Bill dashed through a part of it, and by skillful maneuvering circumvented the rest. But even as the obstacle was passed, the coach dropped with an ominous lurch on one side, and the off fore wheel flew off in the darkness. Bill threw the horses back on their haunches; but, before their momentum could be checked, the near hind wheel slipped away, the vehicle rocked violently, plunged backwards and forwards, and stopped.

Yuba Bill was on the road in an instant with his lantern. Then followed an outbreak of profanity which I regret, for artistic purposes, exceeds that generous limit which a sympathizing public has already extended to me in the explication of character. Let me state, therefore, that in a very few moments he succeeded in disparaging the characters of his employers, their male and female relatives, the coach builder, the station keeper, the road on which he travelled, and the travellers themselves, with occasional broad expletives addressed to himself and his own relatives. For the spirit of this and a more cultivated poetry of expression, I beg to refer the temperate reader to the 3d chapter of Job.

The passengers knew Bill, and sat, conservative, patient, and expectant. As yet the cause of the catas

trophe was not known. At last Thatcher's voice came from the box seat:

"What 's up, Bill?"

"Not a blank lynch pin in the whole blank coach," was the answer.

There was a dead silence. Yuba Bill executed a wild war dance of helpless rage.

"Blank the blank *enchanted* thing to blank!"

(I beg here to refer the fastidious and cultivated reader to the only adjective I have dared transcribe of this actual oath which I once had the honor of hearing. He will I trust not fail to recognize the old classic *dæmon* in this wild western objurgation.)

"Who did it?" asked Thatcher.

Yuba Bill did not reply, but dashed up again to the box, unlocked the 'boot,' and screamed out:

"The man that stole your portmantle, — Wiles!"

Thatcher laughed:

"Do n't worry about that, Bill. A 'biled' shirt, an extra collar, and a few papers. Nothing more."

Yuba Bill slowly descended. When he reached the ground, he plucked Thatcher aside by his coat sleeve:

"Ye do n't mean to say ye had nothing in that bag ye was trying to get away with?"

"No," said the laughing Thatcher frankly.

"And that Wiles war n't one o' them detectives?"

"Not to my knowledge, certainly."

Yuba Bill sighed sadly, and returned to assist in the replacing of the coach on its wheels again.

"Never mind, Bill," said one of the passengers sympathizingly, "we 'll catch that man Wiles at Rawlings sure;" and he looked around at the inchoate vigilance committee, already 'rounding into form' about him.

"Ketch him!" returned Yuba Bill, derisively, "why we 've got to go back to the station; and afore we 're off agin he 's pinted fur Clarmont on the relay we lose. Ketch him! H–ll 's full of such ketches!"

There was clearly nothing to do but to go back to the station to await the repairing of the coach. While this was being done Yuba Bill again drew Thatcher aside:

"I allers suspected that chap's game eye, but I did n't somehow allow for anything like this. I reckoned it was only the square thing to look arter things gen'rally, and 'specially your traps. So, to purvent troubil, and keep things about ekal, ez he was goin' away, I sorter lifted this yer bag of hiz outer the tail board of his sleigh. I do n't know as it is any exchange or compensation, but it may give ye a chance to spot him agin, or him you. It strikes me as bein' far-minded and squar';" and with these words he deposited at the feet of the astounded Thatcher the black travelling bag of Mr. Wiles.

"But, Bill,—see here! I can't take this!" interrupted Thatcher hastily. You can't swear that he 's taken my bag,—and—and,—blank it all,—this won't do, you know. I've no right to this man's things, even if ——"

"Hold your hosses," said Bill gravely; "I ondertook to take charge o' your traps. I did n't — at least that d—d wall-eyed — Thar 's a portmantle! I do n't know who's it is. Take it."

Half amused, half embarrassed, yet still protesting, Thatcher took the bag in his hands.

"Ye might open it in my presence," suggested Yuba Bill gravely.

Thatcher, half laughingly, did so. It was full of papers and semi-legal-looking documents. Thatcher's own name on one of them caught his eye; he opened the paper hastily and perused it. The smile faded from his lips.

"Well," said Yuba Bill, "suppose we call it a fair exchange at present."

Thatcher was still examining the papers. Suddenly this cautious, strong-minded man looked up into Yuba Bill's waiting face, and said quietly, in the despicable slang of the epoch and region:

"It 's a go! Suppose we do."

CHAPTER XIII.

HOW IT BECAME FAMOUS.

Yuba Bill was right in believing that Wiles would lose no time at Rawlings. He left there on a fleet horse before Bill had returned with the broken-down coach to the last station, and distanced the telegram sent to detain him two hours. Leaving the stage road and its dangerous telegraphic stations, he pushed southward to Denver over the army trail, in company with a half-breed packer, crossing the Missouri before Thatcher had reached Julesburg. When Thatcher was at Omaha, Wiles was already in St. Louis; and as the Pullman car containing the hero of the 'Blue Mass' mine rolled into Chicago, Wiles was already walking the streets of the national capital. Nevertheless, he had time *en route* to sink in the waters of the North Platte, with many expressions of disgust, the little black porte-manteau belonging to Thatcher, containing his dressing case, a few unimportant letters, and an extra shirt, to wonder why simple men did not travel with their important documents and valuables,

and to set on foot some prudent and cautious inquiries regarding his own lost carpet bag and its important contents.

But for these trifles he had every reason to be satisfied with the progress of his plans. "It 's all right," said Mrs. Hopkinson merrily; "while you and Gashwiler have been working with your 'stock,' and treating the whole world as if it could be bribed, I 've done more with that earnest, self-believing, self-deceiving, and perfectly-pathetic Roscommon than all you fellows put together. Why, I 've told his pitiful story, and drawn tears from the eyes of Senators and Cabinet Ministers. More than that, I 've introduced him into society, put him in a dress coat,—such a figure!—and you know how the best folk worship everything that is *outre* as the sincere thing. I 've made him a complete success. Why, only the other night, when Senator Misnancy and Judge Fitzdawdle were here, after making him tell his story,—which you know I think he really believes,—I sang 'There came to the beach a poor Exile of Erin,' and my husband told me afterwards it was worth at least a dozen votes."

"But about this rival of yours,—this niece of Garcia's?"

"Another of your blunders; you men know nothing of women. Firstly, she 's a swarthy little brunette, with dots for eyes; and strides like a man, dresses like

a dowdy, do n't wear stays, and has no style. Then, she 's a single woman, and alone; and, although she affects to be an artist, and has Bohemian ways, do n't you see she can't go into society without a chaperon or somebody to go with her. Nonsense."

"But," persisted Wiles, "she must have some power; there 's Judge Mason and Senator Peabody, who are constantly talking about her; and Dinwiddie of Virginia escorted her through the Capitol the other day."

Mistress Hopkinson laughed. "Mason and Peabody aspire to be thought literary and artistic, and Dinwiddie wanted to pique *me!*"

"But Thatcher is no fool" ——

"Is Thatcher a lady's man?" queried the lady suddenly.

"Hardly, I should say," responded Wiles. "He pretends to be absorbed in his swindle and devoted to his mine; and I do n't think that even you" — he stopped with a slight sneer.

"There, you are misunderstanding me again, and, what is worse, you are misunderstanding your case. Thatcher is pleased with her because he has probably seen no one else. Wait till he comes to Washington and has an opportunity for comparison;" and she cast a frank glance at her mirror, where Wiles, with a sardonic bow, left her standing.

Mr. Gashwiler was quite as confident of his own

success with Congress. "We are within a few days of the end of the session. We will manage to have it taken up and rushed through before that fellow Thatcher knows what he is about."

"If it could be done before he gets here," said Wiles, "it's a reasonably sure thing. He is delayed two days: he might have been delayed longer." Here Mr. Wiles sighed. If the accident had happened on a mountain road, and the stage had been precipitated over the abyss, what valuable time would have been saved, and success become a surety? But Mr. Wiles's functions as an advocate did not include murder; at least, he was doubtful if it could be taxed as costs.

"We need have no fears, sir," resumed Mr. Gashwiler; "The matter is now in the hands of the highest tribunal of appeal in the country. It will meet, sir, with inflexible justice. I have already prepared some remarks ——"

"By the way," interrupted Wiles infelicitously, "where's your young man,— your private secretary, — Dobbs?"

The Congressman for a moment looked confused. "He is not here. And I must correct your error in applying that term to him. I have never put my confidence in the hands of any one."

"But you introduced him to me as your secretary?"

"A mere honorary title, sir. A brevet rank. I

might, it is true, have thought to repose such a trust in him. But I was deceived, sir, as I fear I am too apt to be when I permit my feelings as a man to overcome my duty as an American legislator. Mr. Dobbs enjoyed my patronage and the opportunity it gave me to introduce him into public life only to abuse it. He became, I fear, deeply indebted. His extravagance was unlimited, his ambition unbounded, but without, sir, a cash basis. I advanced money to him from time to time upon the little property you so generously extended to him for his services. But it was quickly dissipated. Yet, sir, such is the ingratitude of man that his family lately appealed to me for assistance. I felt it was necessary to be stern, and I refused. I would not for the sake of his family say anything, but I have missed, sir, books from my library. On the day after he left, two volumes of Patent Office reports and a Blue Book of Congress, purchased that day by me at a store on Pennsylvania avenue, were *missing*,—missing! I had difficulty, sir, great difficulty in keeping it from the papers!"

As Mr. Wiles had heard the story already from Gashwiler's acquaintances, with more or less free comment on the gifted legislator's economy, he could not help thinking that the difficulty had been great indeed. But he only fixed his malevolent eye on Gashwiler and said:

"So he is gone, eh?"

"Yes."

"And you 've made an enemy of him? That 's bad."

Mr. Gashwiler tried to look dignifiedly unconcerned; but something in his visitor's manner made him uneasy.

"I say it is bad, if you have. Listen. Before I left here, I found at a boarding-house where he had boarded, and still owed a bill, a trunk which the landlord retained. Opening it, I found some letters and papers of yours, with certain memoranda of his, which I thought ought to be in *your* possession. As an alleged friend of his, I redeemed the trunk by paying the amount of his bill, and secured the more valuable papers."

Gashwiler, whose face had grown apoplectically suffused as Wiles went on, at last gasped: "But you got the trunk, and have the papers?"

"Unfortunately, no; and that 's why it 's bad."

"But, good God! what have you done with them?"

"I 've lost them somewhere on the Overland Road."

Mr. Gashwiler sat for a few moments speechless, vacillating between a purple rage and a pallid fear. Then he said hoarsely:

"They are all blank forgeries,—every one of them."

"Oh, no!" said Wiles, smiling blandly on his dex-

ter side, and enjoying the whole scene malevolently with his sinister eye. "*Your* papers are all genuine, and I won't say are not all right, but unfortunately I had in the same bag some memoranda of my own for the use of my client, that, you understand, might be put to some bad use if found by a clever man."

The two rascals looked at each other. There is on the whole really very little 'honor among thieves,'— at least great ones,—and the inferior rascal succumbed at the reflection of what *he* might do if he were in the other rascal's place. "See here, Wiles," he said, relaxing his dignity with the perspiration that oozed from every pore, and made the collar of his shirt a mere limp rag. "See here, *We*"—this first use of the plural was equivalent to a confession—"*we* must get them papers."

"Of course," said Wiles coolly, "if we *can*, and if Thatcher does n't get wind of them."

"He cannot."

"He was on the coach when I lost them, coming East."

Mr. Gashwiler paled again. In the emergency he had recourse to the sideboard and a bottle, forgetting Wiles. Ten minutes before Wiles would have remained seated; but it is recorded that he rose, took the bottle from the gifted Gashwiler's fingers, helped himself *first*, and then sat down.

"Yes, but, my boy," said Gashwiler, now rapidly changing situations with the cooler Wiles; "yes, but, old fellow," he added, poking Wiles with a fat forefinger, "do n't you see the whole thing will be up before he gets here."

"Yes," said Wiles gloomily, "but those lazy, easy, honest men have a way of popping up just at the nick of time. They never need hurry; all things wait for them. Why, do n't you remember that on the very day Mrs. Hopkinson and I and you got the President to sign that patent, that very day one of them d—n fellows turns up from San Francisco or Australia, having taken his own time to get here,— gets here about half an hour after the President had signed the patent and sent it over to the office, finds the right man to introduce him to the President, has a talk with him, makes him sign an order countermanding its issuance, and undoes all that has been done in six years in one hour."

"Yes, but Congress is a tribunal that does not revoke its decrees," said Gashwiler with a return of his old manner; "at least," he added, observing an incredulous shrug in the shoulder of his companion, "at least *during the session.*"

"We shall see," said Wiles, quietly taking his hat.

"We shall see, sir," said the member from Remus with dignity.

CHAPTER XIV.

WHAT CULTURE DID FOR IT.

There was at this time in the Senate of the United States an eminent and respected gentleman, scholarly, orderly, honorable, and radical,—the fit representative of a scholarly, orderly, honorable, and radical Commonwealth. For many years he had held his trust with conscious rectitude, and a slight depreciation of other forms of merit; and for as many years had been as regularly returned to his seat by his constituency with equally conscious rectitude in themselves and an equal skepticism regarding others. Removed by his nature beyond the reach of certain temptations, and by circumstances beyond even the knowledge of others, his social and political integrity was spotless. An orator and practical debater, his refined tastes kept him from personality, and the public recognition of the complete unselfishness of his motives and the magnitude of his dogmas protected him from scurrility. His principles had never been appealed to by a bribe; he had rarely been approached by an emotion.

A man of polished taste in art and literature, and possessing the means to gratify it, his luxurious home was filled with treasures he had himself collected, and further enhanced by the stamp of his appreciation. His library had not only the elegance of adornment that his wealth could bring and his taste approve, but a certain refined negligence of habitual use, and the easy disorder of the artist's workshop. All this was quickly noted by a young girl who stood on its threshold at the close of a dull January day.

The card that had been brought to the Senator bore the name of 'Carmen de Haro'; and modestly in the right hand corner, in almost microscopic script, the further description of herself as 'Artist.' Perhaps the picturesqueness of the name, and its historic suggestion caught the scholar's taste, for when to his request, through his servant, that she would be kind enough to state her business, she replied as frankly that her business was personal to himself, he directed that she should be admitted. Then entrenching himself behind his library table, overlooking a bastion of books, and a *glacis* of pamphlets and papers, and throwing into his forehead and eyes an expression of utter disqualification for anything but the business before him, he calmly awaited the intruder.

She came, and for an instant stood, hesitatingly, framing herself as a picture in the door. Mrs. Hop-

kinson was right,— she had 'no style,' unless an original and half-foreign quaintness could be called so. There was a desperate attempt visible to combine an American shawl with the habits of a *mantilla*, and it was always slipping from one shoulder, that was so supple and vivacious as to betray the deficiencies of an education in stays. There was a cluster of black curls around her low forehead, fitting her so closely as to seem to be a part of the seal-skin cap she wore. Once, from the force of habit, she attempted to put her shawl over her head and talk through the folds gathered under her chin, but an astonished look from the Senator checked her. Nevertheless, he felt relieved, and rising, motioned her to a chair with a heartiness he would have scarcely shown to a Parisian *toilleta*. And when, with two or three quick, long steps, she reached his side, and showed a frank, innocent, but strong and determined little face, feminine only in its flash of eye and beauty of lip and chin curves, he put down the pamphlet he had taken up somewhat ostentatiously, and gently begged to know her business.

I think I have once before spoken of her voice,— an organ more often cultivated by my fair countrywomen for singing than for speaking, which, considering that much of our practical relations with the sex are carried on without the aid of an opera score, seems a mistaken notion of theirs,— and of its sweetness,

gentle inflexion, and musical emphasis. She had the advantage of having been trained in a musical language, and came of a race with whom catarrhs and sore throats were rare. So that in a few brief phrases she sang the Senator into acquiescence as she imparted the plain libretto of her business,—namely, a "desire to see some of his rare engravings."

Now the engravings in question were certain etchings of the early Great Apprentices of the art, and were, I am happy to believe, extremely rare. From my unprofessional view they were exceedingly bad,—showing the mere genesis of something since perfected, but dear, of course, to the true collector's soul. I do n't believe that Carmen really admired them either. But the minx knew that the Senator prided himself on having the only 'pot-hooks' of the great 'A,' or the first artistic efforts of 'B,'—I leave the real names to be filled in by the connoisseur,—and the Senator became interested. For the last year, two or three of these abominations had been hanging in his study, utterly ignored by the casual visitor. But here was appreciation! "She was," she added, "only a poor young artist, unable to purchase such treasures, but equally unable to resist the opportunity afforded her, even at the risk of seeming bold, or of obtruding upon a great man's privacy," &c. &c.

This flattery, which, if offered in the usual legal

tender of the country, would have been looked upon as counterfeit, delivered here in a foreign accent, with a slightly tropical warmth, was accepted by the Senator as genuine. These children of the Sun are so impulsive! We, of course, feel a little pity for the person who thus transcends our standard of good taste and violates our conventional canon,— but they are always sincere. The cold New Englander saw nothing wrong in one or two direct and extravagant compliments, that would have insured his visitor's early dismissal if tendered in the clipped metallic phrases of the Commonwealth he represented.

So that in a few moments the black, curly head of the little artist and the white, flowing locks of the Senator were close together bending over the rack that contained the engravings. It was then that Carmen, listening to a graphic description of the early rise of Art in the Netherlands, forgot herself and put her shawl around her head, holding its folds in her little brown hand. In this situation they were, at different times during the next two hours, interrupted by five Congressmen, three Senators, a Cabinet officer, and a Judge of the Supreme Bench,— each of whom was quickly but courteously dismissed. Popular sentiment, however, broke out in the hall.

"Well, I'm blanked, but this gets me." (The speaker was a Territorial delegate.)

"At his time o' life, too, lookin' over pictures with a gal young enough to be his grandchild." (This from a venerable official, since suspected of various erotic irregularities.)

"She do n't handsome any." (The honorable member from Dakota.)

"This accounts for his protracted silence during the sessions." (A serious colleague from the Senator's own State.)

"Oh, blank it all!" (*Omnes.*)

Four went home to tell their wives. There are few things more touching in the matrimonial compact than the superb frankness with which each confides to each the various irregularities of their friends. It is upon these sacred confidences that the firm foundations of marriage rest unshaken.

Of course the objects of this comment, at least *one* of them, were quite oblivious. "I trust," said Carmen, timidly, when they had for the fourth time regarded in rapt admiration an abominable something by some Dutch wood-chopper, "I trust I am not keeping you from your great friends:"— her pretty eyelids were cast down in tremulous distress: — "I should never forgive myself. Perhaps it is important business of the State?"

"Oh, dear, no! *They* will come again,— it 's *their* business."

The Senator meant it kindly. It was as near the perilous edge of a compliment as your average cultivated Boston man ever ventures, and Carmen picked it up, femininely, by its sentimental end. "And I suppose *I* shall not trouble you again?"

"I shall always be proud to place the portfolio at your disposal. Command me at any time," said the Senator, with dignity.

"You are kind. You are good," said Carmen, "and I — I am but, — look you, — only a poor girl from California, that you know not."

"Pardon me, I know your country well." And indeed he could have told her the exact number of bushels of wheat to the acre in her own county of Monterey, its voting population, its political bias. Yet of the more important product before him, after the manner of book-read men, he knew nothing.

Carmen was astonished, but respectful. It transpired presently that she was not aware of the rapid growth of the silk worm in her own district, knew nothing of the Chinese question, and very little of the American mining laws. Upon these questions the Senator enlightened her fully. "Your name is historic, by the way," he said pleasantly. "There was a Knight of Alcantara, a 'de Haro,' one of the emigrants with Las Casas."

Carmen nodded her head quickly, "Yes; my great great-great-g-r-e-a-t grandfather!"

The Senator stared.

"Oh, yes. I am the niece of Victor Castro, who married my father's sister."

"The Victor Castro of the 'Blue Mass' mine?" asked the Senator abruptly.

"Yes," she said quietly.

Had the Senator been of the Gashwiler type, he would have expressed himself, after the average masculine fashion, by a long-drawn whistle. But his only perceptible appreciation of a sudden astonishment and suspicion in his mind was a lowering of the social thermometer of the room so decided that poor Carmen looked up innocently, chilled, and drew her shawl closer around her shoulders.

"I have something more to ask," said Carmen, hanging her head, — "it is a great, oh, a very great favor."

The Senator had retreated behind his bastion of books again, and was visibly preparing for an assault. He saw it all now. He had been, in some vague way, deluded. He had given confidential audience to the niece of one of the Great Claimants before Congress. The inevitable axe had come to the grindstone. What might not this woman dare ask of him? He was the more implacable that he felt he had already been prepossessed — and honestly prepossessed — in her favor. He was angry with her for having

pleased him. Under the icy polish of his manner there were certain Puritan callosities caused by early straight-lacing. He was not yet quite free from his ancestor's cheerful ethics that Nature, as represented by an Impulse, was as much to be restrained as Order represented by a Quaker.

Without apparently noticing his manner, Carmen went on, with a certain potential freedom of style, gesture, and manner scarcely to be indicated in her mere words. "You know, then, I am of Spanish blood, and that, what was my adopted country, our motto was, 'God and Liberty.' It was of you, sir,—the great Emancipator,—the apostle of that Liberty,—the friend of the down-trodden and oppressed,—that I, as a child, first knew. In the histories of this great country I have read of you, I have learned your orations. I have longed to hear you in your own pulpit deliver the creed of my ancestors. To hear you, of yourself, speak, ah! *Madre de Dios!* what shall I say,—speak the oration eloquent,—to make the—what you call—the debate, that is what I have for so long hoped. Eh! Pardon,—you are thinking me foolish,—wild, eh?—a small child,—eh?"

Becoming more and more dialectical as she went on, she said suddenly, "I have you of myself offended. You are mad of me as a bold, bad child? It is so?"

The Senator, as visibly becoming limp and weak

again behind his entrenchments, managed to say, "Oh, no!" then, "really!" and finally, "Tha-a-nks!"

"I am here but for a day. I return to California in a day, as it were tomorrow. I shall never, never hear you speak in your place in the Capitol of this great country?"

The Senator said hastily that he feared — he in fact was convinced — that his duty during this session was required more at his desk, in the committee work, than in speaking, &c. &c.

"Ah," said Carmen sadly, "it is true, then, all this that I have heard. It is true that what they have told me,— that you have given up the great party,— that your voice is not longer heard in the old — what you call this — eh — the old *issues?*"

"If any one has told you that, Miss De Haro, responded the Senator sharply, "he has spoken foolishly. You have been misinformed. May I ask who ——"

"Ah!" said Carmen, "I know not! It is in the air! I am a stranger. Perhaps I am de-ceived. But it is of all. I say to them, When shall I hear him speak? I go day after day to the Capitol, I watch him,— the great Emancipator,— but it is of business, eh? — it is the claim of that one, it is the tax, eh? it is the impost, it is the post-office, but it is the great speech of human rights — *never*, NEVER. I say, 'How arrives all this?' And some say, and shake their

heads, 'never again he speaks.' He is what you call 'played — yes, it is so, eh? — played out.' I know it not, — it is a word from Bos-ton, perhaps? They say he has — eh, I speak not the English well — the party he has shaken, 'shook,' — yes, — he has the party 'shaken,' eh? It is right, — it is the language of Bos-ton, eh?"

"Permit me to say, Miss De Haro," returned the Senator, rising with some asperity, "that you seem to have been unfortunate in your selection of acquaintances, and still more so in your ideas of the derivations of the English tongue. The — er — the — er — expressions you have quoted are not common to Boston, but emanate, I believe, from the West."

Carmen De Haro contritely buried everything but her black eyes in her shawl.

"No one," he continued, more gently, sitting down again, "has the right to forecast from my past what I intend to do in the future, or designate the means I may choose to serve the principles I hold or the Party I represent. Those are *my* functions. At the same time, should occasion — or opportunity — for we are within a day or two of the close of the Session——"

"Yes," interrupted Carmen, sadly, "I see, — it will be some business, some claim, something for somebody, — ah! *Madre de Dios*, — you will not speak, and I——"

"When do you think of returning?" asked the Senator, with grave politeness; "when are we to lose you?"

"I shall stay to the last,— to the end of the Session," said Carmen. "And *now* I shall go." She got up and pulled her shawl viciously over her shoulders, with a pretty pettishness, perhaps the most feminine thing she had done that evening. Possibly, the most genuine.

The Senator smiled affably: "You do not deserve to be disappointed in either case; but it is later than you imagine; let me help you on the shorter distance in my carriage; it is at the door."

He accompanied her gravely to the carriage. As it rolled away, she buried her little figure in its ample cushions and chuckled to herself, albeit a little hysterically. When she had reached her destination, she found herself crying, and hastily, and somewhat angrily, dried her eyes as she drew up at the door of her lodgings.

"How have you prospered?" asked Mr. Harlowe, of counsel for Royal Thatcher, as he gallantly assisted her from the carriage. "I have been waiting here for two hours; your interview must have been prolonged, —that was a good sign."

"Do n't ask me now," said Carmen, a little savagely, "I 'm worn out and tired."

Mr. Harlowe bowed. "I trust you will be better tomorrow, for we expect our friend, Mr. Thatcher."

Carmen's brown cheek flushed slightly. "He should have been here before. Where is he? What was he doing?"

"He was snowed up on the plains. He is coming as fast as steam can carry him; but he may be too late."

Carmen did not reply.

The lawyer lingered. "How did you find the great New-England Senator?" he asked with a slight professional levity.

Carmen was tired, Carmen was worried, Carmen was a little self-reproachful, and she kindled easily. Consequently she said icily:

"I found him *a gentleman!*"

CHAPTER XV.

HOW IT BECAME UNFINISHED BUSINESS.

The closing of the —— Congress was not unlike the closing of the several preceding Congresses. There was the same unbusiness-like, impractical haste; the same hurried, unjust, and utterly inadequate adjustment of unfinished, ill-digested business, that would

not have been tolerated for a moment by the sovereign people in any private interest they controlled. There were frauds rushed through; there were long-suffering, righteous demands shelved; there were honest, unpaid debts dishonored by scant appropriations; there were closing scenes which only the saving sense of American humor kept from being utterly vile. The actors, the legislators themselves, knew it, and laughed at it; the commentators, the Press, knew it and laughed at it; the audience, the great American people, knew it and laughed at it. And nobody for an instant conceived that it ever, under any circumstances, might be otherwise.

The claim of Roscommon was among the Unfinished Business. The claimant himself, haggard, pathetic, importunate, and obstinate, was among the Unfinished Business. Various Congressmen, more or less interested in the success of the claim, were among the Unfinished Business. The member from Fresno, who had changed his derringer for a speech against the claimant, was among the Unfinished Business. The gifted Gashwiler, uneasy in his soul over certain other Unfinished Business in the shape of his missing letters, but dropping oil and honey as he mingled with his brothers, was King of Misrule and Lord of the Unfinished Business. Pretty Mrs. Hopkinson, prudently escorted by her husband, but imprudently ogled by

admiring Congressmen, lent the charm of her presence to the finishing of Unfinished Business. One or two editors, who had dreams of a finished financial business, arising out of Unfinished Business, were there also, like ancient bards, to record with pæan or threnody the completion of Unfinished Business. Various unclean birds, scenting carrion in Unfinished Business, hovered in the halls or roosted in the Lobby.

The lower house, under the tutelage of the gifted Gashwiler, drank deeply of Roscommon and his intoxicating claim, and passed the half-empty bottle to the Senate as Unfinished Business. But, alas! in the very rush, and storm, and tempest of the unfinishing business, an unlooked-for interruption arose in the person of a great Senator whose power none could oppose, whose right to free and extended utterance at all times none could gainsay. A claim for poultry, violently seized by the army of Sherman during his march through Georgia, from the hen-coop of an alleged loyal Irishman, opened a constitutional question, and with it the lips of the great Senator.

For seven hours he spoke eloquently, earnestly, convincingly. For seven hours the old issues of party and policy were severally taken up and dismissed in the old forcible rhetoric that had early made him famous. Interruptions from other Senators, now forgetful of Unfinished Business, and wild with reani-

mated party zeal; interruptions from certain Senators mindful of Unfinished Business, and unable to pass the Roscommon bottle, only spurred him to fresh exertion. The tocsin sounded in the Senate was heard in the lower house. Highly-excited members congregated at the doors of the Senate, and left Unfinished Business to take care of itself.

Left to itself for seven hours, Unfinished Business gnashed its false teeth and tore its wig in impotent fury in corridor and hall. For seven hours the gifted Gashwiler had continued the manufacture of oil and honey, whose sweetness, however, was slowly palling upon the congressional lip; for seven hours Roscommon and friends beat with impatient feet the lobby, and shook fists, more or less discolored, at the distinguished Senator. For seven hours the one or two editors were obliged to sit and calmly compliment the great speech which that night flashed over the wires of a continent with the old electric thrill. And, worse than all, they were obliged to record with it the closing of the —— Congress, with more than the usual amount of Unfinished Business.

A little group of friends surrounded the great Senator with hymns of praise and congratulations. Old adversaries saluted him courteously as they passed by with the respect of strong men. A little woman with a shawl drawn over her shoulders, and held with one small brown hand, approached him timidly:

"I speak not the English well," she said gently, "but I have read much. I have read in the plays of your Shakspeare. I would like to say to you the words of Rosalind to Orlando when he did fight: 'Sir you have wrestled well, and have overthrown more than your enemies.'" And with these words she was gone.

Yet not so quickly but that pretty Mrs. Hopkinson, coming,—as Victrix always comes to Victor, to thank the great Senator, albeit the faces of her escorts were shrouded in gloom,—saw the shawled figure disappear.

"There," she said, pinching Wiles mischievously, "there! that 's the woman you were afraid of. Look at her. Look at that dress. Ah, Heavens! look at that shawl. Did n't I tell you she had no style?"

"Who is she?" said Wiles sullenly.

"Carmen de Haro, of course," said the lady vivaciously. "What are you hurrying away so for? You 're absolutely pulling me along."

Mr. Wiles had just caught sight of the travel-worn face of Royal Thatcher among the crowd that thronged the stair-case. Thatcher appeared pale and *distrait:* Mr. Harlowe, his counsel, at his side, rallied him.

"No one would think you had just got a new lease of your property, and escaped a great swindle. What 's the matter with you? Miss De Haro passed us just now. It was she who spoke to the Senator. Why did you not recognize her?"

"I was thinking," said Thatcher gloomily.

"Well, you take things coolly! And certainly you are not very demonstrative towards the woman who saved you today. For, as sure as you live, it was she who drew that speech out of the Senator."

Thatcher did not reply, but moved away. He *had* noticed Carmen De Haro, and was about to greet her with mingled pleasure and embarrassment. But he had heard her compliment to the Senator, and this strong, pre-occupied, automatic man, who only ten days before had no thought beyond his property, was now thinking more of that compliment to another than of his success; and was beginning to hate the Senator who had saved him, the lawyer who stood beside him, and even the little figure that had tripped down the steps unconscious of him.

CHAPTER XVI.

AND WHO FORGOT IT.

It was somewhat inconsistent with Royal Thatcher's embarrassment and sensitiveness that he should, on leaving the Capitol, order a carriage and drive directly to the lodgings of Miss De Haro. That on

finding she was not at home, he should become again sulky and suspicious, and even be ashamed of the honest impulse that led him there, was, I suppose, manlike and natural. He felt that he had done all that courtesy required; he had promptly answered her dispatch with his presence. If she chose to be absent at such a moment, *he* had at least done *his* duty. In short, there was scarcely any absurdity of the imagination which this once practical man did not permit himself to indulge in, yet always with a certain consciousness that he was allowing his feelings to run away with him, — a fact that did not tend to make him better humored, and rather inclined him to place the responsibility of the elopement on somebody else. If Miss De Haro had been home, &c. &c., and not going into ecstacies over speeches, &c. &c., and had attended to her business, — *i. e.*, being exactly what he had supposed her to be, — all this would not have happened.

I am aware that this will not heighten the reader's respect for my hero. But I fancy that the imperceptible progress of a sincere passion in the matured strong man is apt to be marked with even more than the usual haste and absurdity of callous youth. The fever that runs riot in the veins of the robust is apt to pass your ailing weakling by. Possibly there may be some immunity in inoculation. It is Lothario who

is always self-possessed and does and says the right thing, while poor honest Cœlebs becomes ridiculous with genuine emotion.

He rejoined his lawyer in no very gracious mood. The chambers occupied by Mr. Harlowe were in the basement of a private dwelling once occupied and made historic by an Honorable Somebody, who, however, was remembered only by the landlord and the last tenant. There were various shelves in the walls divided into compartments, sarcastically known as 'pigeon holes,' in which the dove of peace had never rested, but which still perpetuated, in their legends, the feuds and animosities of suitors now but common dust together. There was a portrait, apparently of a cherub, which on nearer inspection turned out to be a famous English Lord Chancellor in his flowing wig. There were books with dreary, unenlivening titles,—egotistic always, as recording Smith's opinions on this, and Jones's commentaries on that. There was a hand bill tacked on the wall, which at first offered hilarious suggestions of a circus or a steamboat excursion, but which turned out only to be a sheriff's sale. There were several oddly-shaped packages in newspaper wrappings, mysterious and awful in dark corners, that might have contained forgotten law papers or the previous week's washing of the eminent counsel. There were one or two newspapers, which at first offered

entertaining prospects to the waiting client, but always proved to be a law record or a Supreme Court decision. There was the bust of a late distinguished jurist, which apparently had never been dusted since he himself became dust, and had already grown a perceptibly dusty moustache on his severely-judicial upper lip. It was a cheerless place in the sunshine of day; at night, when it ought, by every suggestion of its dusty past, to have been left to the vengeful ghosts, the greater part of whose hopes and passions were recorded and gathered there; when in the dark the dead hands of forgotten men were stretched from their dusty graves to fumble once more for their old title deeds; at night, when it was lit up by flaring gaslight, the hollow mockery of this dissipation was so apparent that people in the streets, looking through the illuminated windows, felt as if the privacy of a family vault had been intruded upon by body-snatchers.

Royal Thatcher glanced around the room, took in all its dreary suggestions in a half-weary, half-indifferent sort of way, and dropped into the lawyer's own revolving chair as that gentleman entered from the adjacent room.

"Well, you got back soon, I see," said Harlowe briskly.

"Yes," said his client, without looking up, and with this notable distinction between himself and all other

previous clients, that he seemed absolutely less interested than the lawyer. "Yes, I'm here; and, upon my soul, I don't exactly know why."

"You told me of certain papers you had discovered," said the lawyer suggestively.

"Oh, yes," returned Thatcher with a slight yawn. "I've got here some papers somewhere;"—he began to feel in his coat pocket languidly;—"but, by the way, this is a rather dreary and God-forsaken sort of place! Let's go up to Welker's, and you can look at them over a bottle of champagne."

"After I've looked at them, I've something to show you, myself," said Harlowe; "and as for the champagne, we'll have that in the other room, by and by. At present I want to have my head clear, and yours too,—if you'll oblige me by becoming sufficiently interested in your own affairs to talk to me about them."

Thatcher was gazing abstractedly at the fire. He started. "I dare say," he began, "I'm not very interesting; yet it's possible that my affairs have taken up a little too much of my time. However,—" he stopped, took from his pocket an envelope, and threw it on the desk,—"there are some papers. I don't know what value they may be; that is for you to determine. I don't know that I've any legal right to their possession,—that is for you to say, too. They came to

me in a queer way. On the overland journey here I lost my bag, containing my few traps and some letters and papers 'of no value,' as the advertisements say, 'to any but the owner.' Well, the bag was lost, but the stage driver declares that it was stolen by a fellow-passenger,— a man by the name of Giles, or Stiles, or Biles—"

"Wiles," said Harlowe earnestly.

"Yes," continued Thatcher, suppressing a yawn; "Yes, I guess you 're right,— Wiles. Well, the stage driver, finally believing this, goes to work and quietly and unostentatiously steals—I say, have you got a cigar?"

"I'll get you one."

Harlowe disappeared in the adjoining room. Thatcher dragged Harlowe's heavy, revolving desk chair, which never before had been removed from its sacred position, to the fire, and began to poke the coals abstractedly.

Harlowe reappeared with cigars and matches. Thatcher lit one mechanically, and said, between the puffs:

"Do you — ever — talk —to yourself?"

"No! — why?"

"I thought I heard your voice just now in the other room. Anyhow, this is an awful spooky place. If I stayed here alone half an hour, I 'd fancy that the Lord

Chancellor up there would step down in his robes, out of his frame, to keep me company."

"Nonsense! When I'm busy, I often sit here and write until after midnight. It's so quiet!"

"D—mnably so!"

"Well, to go back to the papers. Somebody stole your bag, or you lost it. *You* stole——"

"The driver stole," suggested Thatcher, so languidly that it could hardly be called an interruption.

"Well, we'll say the driver stole, and passed over to you as his accomplice, confederate, or receiver, certain papers belonging—"

"See here, Harlowe, I don't feel like joking in a ghostly law office after midnight. Here are your facts. Yuba Bill, the driver, stole a bag from this passenger, Wiles, or Smiles, and handed it to me to insure the return of my own. I found in it some papers concerning my case. There they are. Do with them what you like."

Thatcher turned his eyes again abstractedly to the fire.

Harlowe took out the first paper:

"A-w, this seems to be a telegram. Yes, eh? 'Come to Washington at once.—Carmen de Haro.'"

Thatcher started, blushed like a girl, and hurriedly reached for the paper.

"Nonsense. That's a mistake. A dispatch I mislaid in the envelope."

"I see," said the lawyer dryly.

"I thought I had torn it up," continued Thatcher, after an awkward pause. I regret to say that here that usually truthful man elaborated a fiction. He had consulted it a dozen times a day on the journey, and it was quite worn in its enfoldings. Harlowe's quick eye had noticed this, but he speedily became interested and absorbed in the other papers. Thatcher lapsed into contemplation of the fire.

"Well," said Harlowe, finally turning to his client, "here's enough to unseat Gashwiler, or close his mouth. As to the rest, it's good reading — but I need n't tell you — no *legal* evidence. But it's proof enough to stop them from ever trying it again, — when the existence of this record is made known. Bribery is a hard thing to fix on a man; the only witness is naturally *particeps criminis;* — but it would not be easy for them to explain away this rascal's record. One or two things I do n't understand: What's this opposite the Hon. X's name, 'Took the medicine nicely, and feels better?' and here, just in the margin, after Y's, 'Must be labored with?'"

"I suppose our California slang borrows largely from the medical and spiritual profession," returned Thatcher. "But is n't it odd that a man should keep a conscientious record of his own villainy?"

Harlowe, a little abashed at his want of knowledge

of American metaphor, now felt himself at home. "Well, no. It 's not unusual. In one of those books yonder there is the record of a case where a man, who had committed a series of nameless atrocities, extending over a period of years, absolutely kept a memorandum of them in his pocket diary. It was produced in Court. Why, my dear fellow, one half our business arises from the fact that men and women are in the habit of keeping letters and documents that they might — I do n't say, you know, that they *ought*, that 's a question of sentiment or ethics — but that they *might* destroy."

Thatcher half-mechanically took the telegram of poor Carmen and threw it in the fire. Harlowe noticed the act and smiled.

"I 'll venture to say, however, that there 's nothing in the bag that *you* lost that need give you a moment's uneasiness. It 's only your rascal or fool who carries with him that which makes him his own detective."

"I had a friend," continued Harlowe, "a clever fellow enough, but who was so foolish as to seriously complicate himself with a woman. He was himself the soul of honor, and at the beginning of their correspondence he proposed that they should each return the other's letters with their answer. They did so for years, but it cost him ten thousand dollars and no end of trouble after all."

"Why?" asked Thatcher simply.

"Because he was such an egotistical ass as *to keep the letter proposing it*, which she had duly returned, among his papers as a sentimental record. Of course somebody eventually found it."

"Good night," said Thatcher, rising abruptly, "If I stayed here much longer I should begin to disbelieve my own mother."

"I have known of such hereditary traits," returned Harlowe with a laugh. "But come, you must not go without the champagne." He led the way to the adjacent room, which proved to be only the ante-chamber of another, on the threshold of which Thatcher stopped with genuine surprise. Is was an elegantly furnished library.

"Sybarite! Why was I never here before?"

"Because you came as a client; tonight you are my guest. All who enter here leave their business, with their hats, in the hall. Look; there is n't a law book on those shelves; that table never was defaced by a title deed or parchment. You look puzzled? Well, it was a whim of mine to put my residence and my work-shop under the same roof, yet so distinct that they would never interfere with each other. You know the house above is let out to lodgers. I occupy the first floor with my mother and sister, and this is my parlor. I do my work in that severe room that fronts

the street: here is where I play. A man must have something else in life than mere business. I find it less harmful and expensive to have my pleasure here."

Thatcher had sunk moodily in the embracing arms of an easy chair. He was thinking deeply; he was fond of books too, and, like all men who have fared hard and led wandering lives, he knew the value of cultivated repose. Like all men who have been obliged to sleep under blankets and in the open air, he appreciated the luxuries of linen sheets and a frescoed roof. It is, by the way, only your sick city clerk or your dyspeptic clergyman, who fancy that they have found in the bad bread, fried steaks, and frowzy flannels of mountain picknicking the true art of living. And it is a somewhat notable fact that your true mountaineer or your gentleman who has been obliged to honestly 'rough it,' does not, as a general thing, write books about its advantages, or implore their fellow mortals to come and share their solitude and their discomforts.

Thoroughly appreciating the taste and comfort of Harlowe's library, yet half-envious of its owner, and half-suspicious that his own earnest life for the past few years might have been different, Thatcher suddenly started from his seat and walked towards a parlor easel, whereon stood a picture. It was Carmen de Haro's first sketch of the furnace and the mine.

"I see you are taken with that picture," said Harlowe, pausing with the champagne bottle in his hand. "You show your good taste. It 's been much admired. Observe how splendidly that fire light plays over the sleeping face of that figure, yet brings out by very contrast its almost death-like repose. Those rocks are powerfully handled; what a suggestion of mystery in those shadows? You know the painter?"

Thatcher murmured, "Miss De Haro," with a new and rather odd self-consciousness in speaking her name.

"Yes. And you know the story of the picture of course?"

Thatcher thought he did n't. Well, no; in fact, he did not remember.

"Why, this recumbent figure was an old Spanish lover of hers, whom she believed to have been murdered there. It 's a ghastly fancy, is n't it?"

Two things annoyed Thatcher: first the epithet 'lover,' as applied to Concho by another man; second, that the picture belonged to him: and what the d—l did she mean by ——

"Yes," he broke out finally, "but how did *you* get it?"

"Oh, I bought it of her. I 've been a sort of patron of her ever since I found out how she stood towards us. As she was quite alone here in Washington, my

mother and sister have taken her up, and have been doing the social thing."

"How long since?" asked Thatcher.

"Oh, not long. The day she telegraphed you, she came here to know what she could do for us, and when I said nothing could be done except to keep Congress off, why, she went and *did it*. For *she*, and she alone, got that speech out of the Senator. But," he added, a little mischievously, "you seem to know very little about her?"

"No!—I—that is—I've been very busy lately," returned Thatcher, staring at the picture. "Does she come here often?"

"Yes, lately, quite often; she was here this evening with mother; was here, I think, when you came."

Thatcher looked intently at Harlowe. But that gentleman's face betrayed no confusion. Thatcher refilled his glass a little awkwardly, tossed off the liquor at a draught, and rose to his feet.

"Come, old fellow, you're not going now. I shan't permit it," said Harlowe, laying his hand kindly on his client's shoulder. "You're out of sorts! Stay here with me tonight. Our accommodations are not large, but are elastic. I can bestow you comfortably until morning. Wait here a moment while I give the necessary orders."

Thatcher was not sorry to be left alone. In the

last half hour he had become convinced that his love for Carmen de Haro had been in some way most dreadfully abused. While *he* was hard at work in California, she was being introduced in Washington society by parties with eligible brothers who bought her paintings. It is a relief to the truly jealous mind to indulge in plurals. Thatcher liked to think that she was already beset by hundreds of brothers.

He still kept staring at the picture. By and by it faded away in part, and a very vivid recollection of the misty, midnight, moonlit walk he had once taken with her came back, and refilled the canvass with its magic. He saw the ruined furnace; the dark, overhanging masses of rock, the trembling intricacies of foliage, and, above all, the flash of dark eyes under a *mantilla* at his shoulder. What a fool he had been! Had he not really been as senseless and stupid as this very Concho, lying here like a log. And she had loved that man. What a fool she must have thought him that evening! What a snob she must think him now?

He was startled by a slight rustling in the passage, that ceased almost as he turned. Thatcher looked towards the door of the outer office, as if half expecting that the Lord Chancellor, like the commander in Don Juan, might have accepted his thoughtless invitation. He listened again; everything was still. He

was conscious of feeling ill at ease and a trifle nervous. What a long time Harlowe took to make his preparations. He would look out in the hall. To do this it was necessary to turn up the gas. He did so, and in his confusion turned it out!

Where were the matches? He remembered that there was a bronze something on the table that, in the irony of modern decorative taste, might hold ashes or matches, or anything of an unpicturesque character. He knocked something over, evidently the ink,— something else,— this time a champagne glass. Becoming reckless, and now groping at random in the ruins, he overturned the bronze Mercury on the center table, and then sat down hopelessly in his chair. And then a pair of velvet fingers slid into his, with the matches, and this audible, musical statement:

"It is a match you are seeking? Here is of them."

Thatcher flushed, embarrassed, nervous,— feeling the ridiculousness of saying "Thank you" to a dark somebody,— struck the match, beheld by its brief, uncertain glimmer Carmen de Haro beside him, burned his fingers, coughed, dropped the match, and was cast again into outer darkness.

"Let me try!"

Carmen struck a match, jumped briskly on the chair, lit the gas, jumped lightly down again, and said: "You do like to sit in the dark,— eh? So am I— sometimes — alone."

"Miss de Haro," said Thatcher, with sudden, honest earnestness, advancing with outstretched hands, "believe me I am sincerely delighted, overjoyed, again to meet—"

She had, however, quickly retreated as he approached, esconcing herself behind the high back of a large antique chair, on the cushion of which she knelt. I regret to add also that she slapped his outstretched fingers a little sharply with her inevitable black fan as he still advanced.

"We are not in California. It is Washington. It is after mid-night. I am a poor girl, and I have to lose — what you call — 'a character' You shall sit over there," — she pointed to the sofa,—"and I shall sit here;" she rested her boyish head on the top of the chair; "and we shall talk, for I have to speak to you, Don Royal."

Thatcher took the seat indicated, contritely, humbly, submissively. Carmen's little heart was touched. But she still went on over the back of the chair.

"Don Royal," she said, emphasizing each word at him with her fan, "before I saw you,— ever knew of you,— I was a child. Yes, I was but a child! I was a bold, bad child; — and I was what you call a — a — 'forgaire'!"

"A what?" asked Thatcher, hesitating between a smile and a sigh.

"A forgaire!" continued Carmen demurely. "I did of myself write the names of ozzer peoples;" when Carmen was excited she lost the control of the English tongue; "I did write just to please myself; —it was my onkle that did make of it money; — you understand, eh? Shall you not speak? Must I again hit you?"

"Go on," said Thatcher laughing.

"I did find out, when I came to you at the mine, that I had forged against you the name of Micheltorena. I to the lawyer went, and found that it was so —of a verity — so! so! all the time. Look at me not now, Don Royal; — it is a 'forgaire' you stare at."

"Carmen!"

"Hoosh! Shall I have to hit you again? I did overlook all the papers. I found the application: it was written by me. There."

She tossed over the back of her chair an envelope to Thatcher. He opened it.

"I see," he said gently, "you repossessed yourself of it!"

"What is that — 'r-r-r-e — possess'?"

"Why!"—Thatcher hesitated—"you got possession of this paper,— this innocent forgery,— again."

"Oh! You think me a thief as well as a 'forgaire.' Go away! Get up. Get out."

"My dear girl ——"

"Look at the paper! Will you? Oh, you silly!"

Thatcher looked at the paper. In paper, handwriting, age, and stamp it was identical with the formal, clerical application of Garcia for the grant. The indorsement of Micheltorena was unquestionably genuine. *But the application was made for Royal Thatcher.* And his own signature was imitated to the life.

"I had but one letter of yours wiz your name," said Carmen apologetically; "and it was the best poor me could do."

"Why, you blessed little goose and angel," said Thatcher, with the bold, mixed metaphor of amatory genius, "do n't you see ——"

"Ah, you do n't like it,—it is not good?"

"My darling!"

"Hoosh! There is also an 'old cat' up stairs. And now I have here a character. *Will* you sit down? Is it of a necessity that up and down you should walk and awaken the whole house? There!"—she had given him a vicious dab with her fan as he passed. He sat down.

"And you have not seen me nor written to me for a year?"

"Carmen!"

"Sit down, you bold, bad boy. Do n't you see it is of business that you and I talk down here; and it is

of business that ozzer people up stairs are thinking. Eh?"

"D—n business! See here, Carmen, my darling, tell me" — I regret to say he had by this time got hold of the back of Carmen's chair — "tell me, my own little girl,— about — about that Senator. You remember what you said to him?"

"Oh, the old man? Oh, *that* was business. And you say of business, 'd—n.'"

"Carmen!"

"Don Royal!"

* * * * *

Although Miss Carmen had recourse to her fan frequently during this interview, the air must have been chilly, for a moment later, on his way down stairs, poor Harlowe, a sufferer from bronchitis, was attacked with a violent fit of coughing, which troubled him all the way down.

"Well," he said, as he entered the room, "I see you have found Mr. Thatcher, and shown those papers. I trust you have, for you 've certainly had time enough. I am sent by mother to dismiss you all to bed."

Carmen still in the arm chair, covered with her *mantilla*, did not speak.

"I suppose you are by this time lawyer enough to know," continued Harlowe, "that Miss De Haro's papers, though ingenious, are not legally available, unless ——"

"I chose to make her a witness. Harlowe! you're a good fellow! I do n't mind saying to you that these are papers I prefer that my *wife* should not use. We 'll leave it for the present — Unfinished Business."

They did. But one evening our hero brought Mrs. Royal Thatcher a paper containing a touching and beautiful tribute to the dead Senator.

"There, Carmen, love, read that. Do n't you feel a little ashamed of your — your — your lobbying — "

"No," said Carmen promptly. "It was business,— and if all lobbying business was as honest,—well?—"

University of California
SOUTHERN REGIONAL LIBRARY FACILITY
405 Hilgard Avenue, Los Angeles, CA 90024-1388
Return this material to the library
from which it was borrowed.

UC SOUTHERN REGIONAL LIBRARY FACILITY
A 000 109 656 9

ia U